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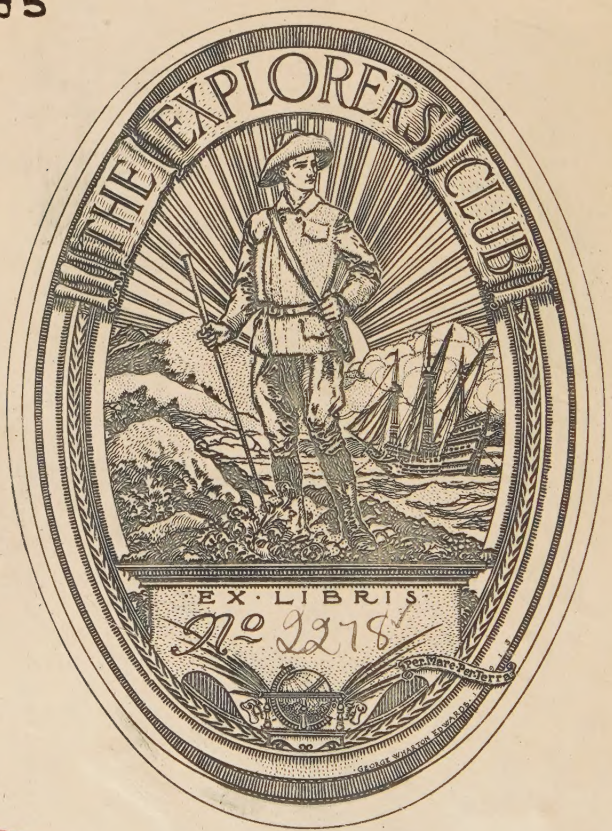

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Ethnographic Survey of India.

A Prabhu Marriage

CUSTOMARY AND RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES PERFORMED IN THE MARRIAGE OF A MEMBER OF THE CHĀNDRASENI KĀYASTH PRABHUS OF BOMBAY

With a chapter on some Curiosities of Marriage Customs in India.

BY

RAI BAHADUR B. A. GUPTE, F.Z.S.,

Assistant Director of Ethnography for India.

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INDIAN MUSEUM,
NATURAL HISTORY SECTION,
Calcutta, the 21st December 1910.

EAR MR. GUPTE,

I AM sorry that I have not had time to go through the whole f the paper which you asked me to criticize. If I may make a uggestion as regards it, it seems to me that it would be much more seful to Ethnologists if it was somewhat compressed, but the reater part of it seems very interesting. The proofs are herewith eturned.

Yours truly,

(Sd.) N. ANNANDALE.

AI B. A. GUPTE, BAHADUR.

A Prabhu Marriage.

Prabhus are Hindus who claim a Kshatriya or Warrior origin, and now follow the learned professions. They are chiefly found in the Bombay Presidency, Central Provinces, Central India, Gujerat and the Baroda State. The name Chāndraseni is said to have been derived from the Chinab *alias* the Chandra, and their nickname Dālbhya points to Dālbhum as their second stage of migration during prehistoric times. They are possibly northerners who have settled in the West under the territorial nicknames just mentioned with the professional adjective Kāyasthas which also points to Oudh as the cradle of the tribe from Sanskrit Kāya, Anga, or Oudh.* Prabhu means a lord, a chief, and the people of this caste are socially accepted as a community of twice-born or patrician people. They have among them the hereditary ministers of Satara, Baroda, Dhār, and Dharampur with many Sardārs and Jahāgirdārs. In the social grouping of the Bombay Castes, they have come next to the Brahmans in the last Census Report (1901). Aristocratic associations, and vague memories of high positions in the Native States, have made them somewhat vain and therefore their marriage expenses are rather on a prodigal scale. Many sensible parents feel this, but the pressure of public opinion in the community compels them to spend lavishly their earnings or savings and to incur debt for the sake of their daughters. The boy's father expects a dower, but there are instances—though rare, in which it is not claimed. One has to remain on the look-out for a suitable

* Chāndra-sreni or clan of the Chandra is mythologically personified into King Chandrasen, and the District of Dalbhum into Saint Dālabhya. The Prabhus therefore call themselves the descendants and followers of Chandrasen and the disciples or religious followers of Rishi Dālabhya; they are called Kāyasth because they now follow the profession of that class.

future husband for his daughter even before she drops her milk-teeth! It is a matter of great anxiety to the mother of the girl in particular, and she—like a "good wife"—never ceases "talking" over to her husband of this boy or that whenever she can get an opportunity to do so. In a high class Hindu family, it is not customary for the husband and wife to sit together during leisure, to dine together, or to take their "tea" together, although tea has been introduced in all refined households and holds its own. Just as a photographer has to be always on the look-out for the proper moment to take a snap-shot, the mother has to be on the alert, and she is always so. There comes an honoured guest and enquiries are always made by the ladies about the boys he may have. If the social and official position of the father is high enough or respectable enough, the lady never fails to coach her husband as to what he has to say during the meals—during the meals so that she may overhear. This sort of thing goes on until the girl passes the first decade, then comes the more serious tone and the ever increasing allegations and accusations—though pleasant enough—of indifference to the interests of the girl, gradually developing into taunts. A selection is made in consultation with the lady and the elders and a short list of eligible boys is prepared. The husband has to begin by gradually approaching the father of the boy beginning with casual enquiries as to when he thinks of getting his young hopeful married. As soon as he sees that his conversation receives a kindly response he advances further, and further, and by some time addressing the father 'a *Vyāhi*'—or the mother—if he is familiar enough—a *Vihin* in joke! If there is a response say, "Oh you are a big man, your daughter is a beauty. You do not mean to offer her for our boy. This is perhaps a mere joke! "We cannot heap jewels on her as you have been doing". Your wife would not like the alliance!" That is a hopeful sign. But if he gets a rejoinder like "Well, we are not thinking of the marriage of that naughty boy at present. Let him study. One does not know how he may turn up, and I do not think you can

afford to wait as your girl is growing fast! She will be too big for our chap, I am afraid. Do not wait for him. Besides, we mean to consult the horoscopes. Much will depend on *that*!" This is a negative reply, and the father of the girl must turn his attention in another direction. Under the hopeful case just mentioned, there is no promise, no assurance, no definite decision, *only* a hope! No *Ghataks* or middle-men are employed. Enquiries about the parties are made through friends and relations; and of late educated fathers take care to see that the boy and the girl like each other. Exchange of photographs, opportunities to show the parties to each other, and, if possible, glimpses of impressions through friends and equals are carefully collected together before the final steps are taken.

The girl can never be taken to the house of the future father-in-law. It is an innovation and breach of the rule that "the bridegroom's father or elders, have to go to the town of the bride's father, and there to see the girl under his own roof". But practical politics compel one to turn this law into a dead letter at the cost of whisperings and disapprovals behind one's back! In the interest of his child a father has to overrule custom. This done, the next step is to find out the inclination of the hero of the tale. His friends and equals do that easily enough. They begin talking of the family and of the girl and are soon able to fathom his mind. They leave on his desk all the photographs of the girls offered and watch his movements. If he is sensible, he quietly drops or returns all the likenesses except the one he likes, and keeps it in his drawer! He dare not display it, for it is immodest to do so. The news of the approval by the boy soon reaches the parents of the girl. He then collects a few elders of the town and goes to the house of the bridegroom's father to "propose" a match. It is accepted in vague but assuring terms. Vague but assuring! Contradictions cannot both be true, and yet they are in this case. The rule has an exception. The answer is "Before we decide as to when our boy is to be married we shall surely

let you know of the date". This precaution is absolutely necessary as any mishap among the cognates of the two families is considered ominous and the match has to be broken off. Thus assured, the father of the girl remains satisfied but as she grows, her mother feels uneasy for fear she may attain puberty before the ceremony is performed and be doomed 'to perdition.' There is also the strong feeling of the caste-people to be respected and Manu cannot be easily disobeyed. On the other hand, the boy's father has to see that he makes sufficient "progress in education before he is chained." This struggle goes on until the anxious father can hold no longer, and begins annoying the other party with importunate letters. At last the time comes and he is asked to "see" him. He goes and settles the match.

Sākharpuda.—The approval of the girl and of the alliance, by the bridegroom and his family respectively ends in the selection. The girl has no direct voice but her likes and dislikes are carefully fathomed through her girl friends. If she says "Why is papa in such a hurry to get rid of me, or turns her face and goes away as soon as the proposed family is mentioned, a sensible father drops the case, and turns his attention to some other boy. This is the direct result of higher education under the British rule, but among the masses, the girl has absolutely no voice and the boy has very little unless he revolts and disobediently declines to accept a girl already selected. The parents of the parties settle the match—the insoluble knot—the lifelong alliance, is decided by them either in the interest of the parties, or of themselves as regards gain. As a girl's father receiving money is not known in this caste, even under the teeth of poverty, the bridegroom's father is the gainer, according to the circumstances, social position, and personal inclinations of both the parties. In the case of the boy, in addition to the selection of the girl, the family, and the dower, there is a modern element of the most vital importance. If sensible, the boy sees that his mother's anxiety to get him married and settled in life, will add to the responsibilities of his father, and

may come in his way as regards education, he often writes a modest and respectful letter to his father begging of him permission to complete his college course, when the father is seen arranging a match for him along with that of his sister to save expenses, or to please his (the boy's) mother. A father drops the subject and all offers are rejected for the time being. Then the daughter's affair proceeds.

The father of the bridegroom invites the palace astrologer (we are supposed to be in the capital of a Native State) his family priests and half a dozen or more men learned in Sanskrit lore. The palace astrologer calculates and recalculates and calculates again until he finds out the auspicious day and hour either with the help of the horoscopes or if they are non-existent as is often the case in these days of advanced civilization, or if not produced out of principle as is done by the progressive section of the community, who decline to expose themselves to the mercy of the crafty priests in settling the matches of their children. It very often happens that everything is amicably settled except the *greed* of the priest and he manages to find out some disagreement between the horoscopes of the marriageable parties to vent his anger. This trick has been sufficiently exposed and the educated portion of this ultra-literary caste have in most cases discarded horoscopes, planatory conjunctions altogether. Under these restrictions, the only thing the council of astrologers have to do is to draw up two documents giving his diagrams based on the names of the parties—for names are presumably selected according to the conjunctions of the stars at birth. But they are often not, and depend on the liking of the father for a family-god, a mythological hero, a historical hero, a patron, or a celebrated ancestor in the case of the boy. In that of the girl the favourite deity or a character in the most recent fable or drama the father has just read. These *Kundalis* or astrological tables drawn by the astrologer are mere formalities but they have to be drawn in conformity with the custom! Thus completed, the names of Ganesh and other gods intervening, both the

documents are worshipped in the name of Saraswati, the goddess of learning, and ceremoniously offered to the parents who accept them with equal ceremony in the folds of their scarves,—not in the hand direct. The distribution of cash to the astrologers and priests and *pān-supāri* and *atar* to the family-friends gathered to witness the ceremony, complete this fixture of the date business. In the meantime the ladies on either side are busy and when they are ready, an auspicious moment is fixed for another meeting. Friends, relations, and respectable neighbours, are invited, a high stool is placed in the hall in front of the *Devaghar* (literary god's house) or room assigned to the family gods. When all invited guests,—ladies and gentlemen—have arrived, the fathers of the parties are asked to worship Ganesh—the God of success first, and the bride and the bridegroom as Lakshimi, the Goddess of wealth and Vishnu, her all-pervading husband. The girl is seated on the raised seat covered with a cushion or *Gāsha* an embroidered carpet. She is already dressed in a new garment called *paithani* (from *Paithan*) a silk embroidered *sāri*—with gold borders and elaborate end—worth about Rs. 125. She is, after the nominal worship in which the *Kunkum-tilak* or red powdered mark on the foreheads forms a significant part, given another cloth together with a bodice cloth along with cocoanut—which is placed in the principal fold of the *sāri*. All this is done by the future mother-in-law. The future father-in-law then places a garland first offered to the family goddess of chastity and plenty (Annapurna) and gives it to her to put round her neck as a sign of blessing and she goes to the *Zanāna*. Then comes the bridegroom on the stage, he is worshipped and given a gold bordered pair of *dhotis* worth Rs. 125 or so, turban worth Rs. 25 to Rs. 35 and a ring—the last is not a necessary thing. But some fathers of girls prefer it as perhaps an earnest of their desire to do their best. The value varies. Distribution of *pān-supāri*, *atar* to the invited guests and *dakshana* or cash to the uninvited priests along with the filling up of the *otis* or folds of *sāris* of the married women invited by the

ladies ends this "selection" ceremony called *Sākharpuda* from the conical bundle of sweets handed over to the bride and the bridegroom by their future fathers-in-law. No respectable gentleman will break this match without incurring the displeasure of the society in which he moves. As these ceremonies are arranged along with others to economise expenses, it is considered good manners to present cloths to other parties such as the brothers or sisters of the boy or girl concerned. The total expenditure may be put down as Rs. 200 besides the ring. One thing to be carefully interpreted is the wreath. It is first put round the image of the goddess of Chastity and plenty and then offered to the girl as her *prasād* blessing (gift) and the symbolical blessing "may you be as chaste and your presence as auspicious as of the goddess", that is "may the spirit of the goddess enter your body when you come to our house." While in the case of the bridegroom the garland is not previously offered to any God or Goddess. There he is himself considered to be in the place of the "All-pervading protector God Vishnu." The selection of the constant wife of Shiva as a model for the girl and that of the Protector Vishnu for the bridegroom merely portray the desire—the wish—of the parties or the "like producing like" sort of belief.

The chief ceremony is now only a few days ahead, as the fear of accidents in the family necessitates its early performance. The mother of the girl who is very anxious to please her daughter's mother-in-law draws up a list of the principal gifts. It goes to the father who is equally desirous of avoiding discontent. It is forwarded to the bridegroom's house with a trusted agent who shows it first to the ladies, gets free criticism or amendments, adds the articles suggested and submits it to the head of the family.

The approved list does not undergo much alteration on either side beyond a mere suggestion as to the omission of a thing or two through oversight or ignorance of the people to be specially honoured for special reasons. It must be remembered that the lists are submitted by the *father* of the girl and that

again voluntarily. It is not customary to do so. It is only his anxiety to please, that dictates the plan. No respectable people take hold of this opportunity to extort, suggestions mostly consist of omissions of names of "important" parties and their position in the family. Absolutely no demand is made of any kind. It is merely an expression of the respect due to certain parties.

Preparations thus proceed in all directions and a very elegant large *Mandap* or marriage bower is raised in front of the proposed residence of the bride and one in front of the mansion of the bridegroom. Along the sides and behind the buildings; bowers are also raised for accommodating the large number of guests invited and uninvited, a separate bower for the priests and Brahmans who get the smell of the opulence of the parties and gather together into the city from surrounding villages,—a third bower for the kitchen, a fourth one for menials and a large shamiana for non-Hindu and European guests, with chairs, sophas, flags, pinnions, curtains, carpets, cushions, chandeliers, Kitsen lights, Chinese lanterns, flower pots, and all that would make gaiety still more gay. The worry of putting everything in its place, putting it straight, assigning the supervision of each section to trusted servants for menial work, and reliable relations for ceremonial work, mixed with telegrams announcing arrivals of guests, distribution of rooms, beds, attendants, according to rank and relationship, receptions at the station, mistakes in adjusting "transhipments," in sending wrong sort of carriage for the ladies, mistakes in purchases, misdemeanour of the menials, a confusion worst confounded! New servants, new town, new society, new local environment, new rules of etiquette, everything new. But one or two days before the actual ceremony begins everything is calm and settled down, the ladies alone are busy with endless plans and suggestions beyond calculation. But there comes an urgent telegram. The bride and her mother are expected, information is given to the bridegroom's father. In all haste preparations are made to give her a grand and suitable recep-

tion. Oh, the flutter among the girls assembled in the house of the bridegroom from all quarters! Every one is dressed in her best and is trying to be the foremost in welcoming the new bride, the Goddess Lakshmi. The numerous maid servants of the house want to prostrate themselves before their future queen at the *Simā* or borderland of the city which is of course the Railway station. Musicians have been already despatched! The platform is full of girls most gaily dressed and the station staff is absorbed in wondering at the "fashions and jewels." The train arrives, the party assemble at the waiting room, a maid servant waves rice and water to "take off" the effects of evil eyes and the party starts amid admiring eyes of the passengers and on-lookers. As soon as the girl reaches her father's temporary residence, another girl waves rice and water and throws it away. The girls of the bridegroom's house run home and come back again with a *Kalash* (water pot) full of water, with its mouth covered with mangoe leaves and topped over with a cocoanut, and a large tray of sugar. This is called *Sākhar-pāni*, sugar and water, the first to wash the mouth with and the second to sweeten it. The elderly ladies who accompany the *Sākhar-pāni* make courteous enquiries with the mother of the bride about the comforts of the journey. "Was it very tedious? Was it a very hot day! She is a delicate child. She must have suffered a lot in those carriages. I am glad you travelled in reserved accommodation" and so forth. But the girls have by this time all gathered round the bride and are busy cheering her up with encouraging remarks. "Oh she is a Rati, the goddess of beauty" says one, "How delicate", adds another, "What a fine nose", adds a third, but "Look at the eyes", adds another. All complimentary and comforting. "We are glad you are coming to '*our* house'", says a sister-in-law in prospect, "We are happy you are going to be our *mālkin*, mistress", adds a maid servant. "Of course during her last birth she has most devoutly worshipped Gauri-Har, the most loving pair of the Trinity." As soon as the elderly ladies have completed their courteous enquiries,

pān-supāri and *oti* are distributed and the party returns home. But on arrival, the girls gather round the bridegroom to tease him. "Oh you *Sudhārak* (reformer)." "Oh you Sáheb (European) *you* have selected your bride. You have seen her *before* marriage. You have broken the rule of the society. You ought to be excommunicated." But adds another "He will now have no time to speak to us." "His *Rati* (Goddess of beauty) and he! The *sáheb* and the *Memsáheb*! We shall be all forgotten now." "Who cares for sisters and cousins in these days of civilization." But all these little wits of the little girls are meant as congratulations for having secured a good girl.

Simānt-pujan.—The time is pressing. The *Simānt-pujan* ought to have been performed ceremoniously at the boundary but the railway (the iron-horse) has annihilated distance. It is inconvenient to perform a ceremony included in the religious part of the affair, in any place but the residence of the parties. The bridegroom is supposed to have arrived from his own town to that of the girl in spite of facts to the contrary and he is the first to be honoured. In a capital of a Native State where the high position of the family is still maintained along with its wealth, a large number of people are invited to take part. Elephants, caparisoned horses in embroidered saddles, camels decorated to hide their ugly exterior, *pālkhis*, carriages, and all the paraphernalia of a palace-*toshākhāna* are in evidence. The bride's father goes ceremoniously with his wife and relations to the bridegroom's house. There the personified Vishnu is made to sit on a raised seat, worshipped and offered a dress and the party starts for a temple which in former days was the place where he was received. Some offerings are made to the city-Father (Khedāpati, *lit.* village-God) and the procession returns home. Distribution of *atar*, *pān*, flowers, wreaths and a tray-ful of almonds, dates, and betel-nuts complete the ceremony. This is a "welcome" to the bridegroom in his own house. It retains its name though—*Simānt-pujan* means literally reception with worship at the boundary stone!

But the meaning is lost here when one meets with corruptions in orthography among the most educated Brahmans and Prabhus. It is called *Simānt-pujan*, (2) *Simanti*, *Shrimanti*, or even *Shevanti*. The first means the worship of the rich, the second is above translation, the third means richness and the fourth, chrysanthemum flower ! It will thus be seen that it is a perfectly meaningless ceremony or display of riches, when the girl arrives in the town of the bridegroom, and yet is full of meaning—the most honoured reception to the bridegroom. But the ceremony cannot be omitted. Custom rules the society ! When asked, the priests say "*Rudhir baliyasi*, custom is all powerful." The worship of Ganesh and of Varuna precedes every ceremony henceforward. In fact all that has been done up to this time forms, or ought to form, no part of religion. Then there are the side festivities of *Gadagner* or banquets given to the bride and the bridegroom, by their own relations and friends consist merely of dinners and dress profusely given, as a sort of congratulatory entertainment. The other party takes no part. Each family group alone is concerned.

The Mandap.—The Mandap is now practically ready, but religiously it has got to be consecrated. This special *mandap* is not outside the house but it is the second quadrangle in the open space, surrounded on all sides by large terraces, balconies, or halls of the second floor and including the "lower flats" thereof they enclose a space known as the *Chauk* or quadrangle. It is here that the religious *mandap* or marriage bower has to be erected. The astrologer has to be consulted, the moment he fixes has to be accepted, as the most auspicious. The text giving the architectural plan as quoted from Vasistha-Smriti says "That the *Mandap* should be sixteen *ārnikas* square." [An *ārnika* is the length of the arm from the head of the ulna to the tip of the small finger.] It should have four doors in the four directions. It should have arches all round and archlets at the doors. It should be decorated with *torans* (made of the mangoe-leaves) and inside it should be raised the *Vedi*,

or platform of masonry-work for the sacred fire-worship. To begin the ceremony, (*a*) worship Ganesh, (*b*) worship Varun, (*c*) dig a hole, (*d*) take a branch of the mangoe or *ficus glomerata*, (*e*) tie a bundle of grass with a yellow strip of cloth already provided at one end with a whole betel-nut and an entire turmeric tuber, (*f*) worship the pillar with due offerings, and (*g*) put it in the hole prepared for it, (*h*) wave a lamp round it, (*i*) offer food, incense, camphor, etc. The superstructure is left to the choice of the *maistri* or architect who is subsequently asked to finish the work.

The Vedi.

The brick-and-mud platform raised for the chief fire-worship is called *Vedi* from Sanskrit *Vedika*. In a marriage the *Vedika* is constructed in the house of the bride and not that of the bridegroom. It is also called *bahule* from *bahula*, fire.

Kumkum-patrikas.

Before the regular work begins, it is presumed that *Kunkum-patrikās* or letters of invitation have been issued, duly sprinkled with *Kunkum* or the solution of saffron. Now-a-days, they are printed on pink paper in gold ink or on any paper with red ink. Printed cards are often substituted. This invitation has the figure of Ganesh at the top. A copy of this letter or card is placed before the family Gods and they are verbally (as well) invited to grace the ceremony with their presence to make it a success, in words to the effect. "On Shri Rāmchandra, the Lord of Ayodhya, I prostrate respectfully before thee and humbly solicit the favour of thy presence in this ceremony to make it a success, and to grace the proceedings with thy august presence. My lord, pray bring Mother Sita and my lords Lakshuman, Bharat and Shatrughna. May it please my Lord to bring all the officers of State and all the residents of Ayodhya thy sacred Capital."

The letter of invitation contains similar request in a respectful but non-reverential strain, it should mention the names of the bride and the bridegroom and of their respective parents, the place, date and hour of the chief or marriage ceremony.

The *Vedi* alias *bahule* or altar has to be built after a definite plan described in the Nārad-smriti and Prayog Ratnākar thus : "This sacred fire-altar should be to the left of the house occupied by the bride. It should be one hand in height and four hands square with the addition of two breadths of the bricks in use for the back. The space available should be square. The measure to be taken from the hand of the bridegroom, but if that cannot be done the bride's hand will do as well. The upper surface of the altar should be plane but slightly sloping in front. It should have a back like that of a pulpit but it should be made up of steps and topped over with a lotus-bud-shaped lump of clay. In some places a second back is raised behind the stepped one. At the four corners of the altar there should be ornamental pillars with a roof adorned with mango leaves, etc. But in addition to the fringe of the auspicious mango leaves it is customary to decorate the roof with artificial flowers made of tinted paper. A pot, *Kalash*, full of water should be placed near the altar, and the pillars or uprights should have young plantain trees tied to them. The back of the altar is painted with the figure of Ganesh in the centre and borders in foliage and birds and animals. The brick-layer gets Rs. 1-4-0 in cash and a turban, the painter is paid according to his skill and the amount of workmanship he displays. At the main entrance of the house he has to paint a Ganesh or an oleograph adorns it. On either side of the dome mythological marriage-scenes are painted on the walls. On one side for instance stands *Ràma* with the gigantic bow of Parasurām bent and broken, with a large number of Rājās and Mahārājās on the back-ground, and at the other end of the arena, Sita riding an elephant in front with a wreath of flowers in the snout of the big beast, and another in her own hand ready to put round the victor's neck. On the other side of the door stands the *Rath* or carriage of Krishna driven by his charioteer, and Rukhmini just stepping into it from the verandah of a temple to elope, a large body of men headed by her brother in pursuit all in the

back-ground. Sita and Rukmini are models of chastity and types of devotional attributes. Thus, the house, the bowers, and the *Vedi* are all ready. There is now such a succession of simultaneous ceremonies that it would be difficult to describe them in any sequence. Some of the religious ones have no religion in them but because they have been entered in the Sanskrit text, they have attained sanctity. It would therefore not be convenient to separate them into (1) those requiring the presence of priests and (2) those performed without their help. Those based on texts are of course stereo-typed and in no way differ from what the Brahmans themselves do, but in the second set there are gliympes of ethnological interest.

As a rule, girls must be married after the completion of eight years and before attaining puberty, boys generally being from four to six years older. Polygamy is allowed, but it is resorted to mainly in cases of failure of male issue; it is very unpopular and has almost become a thing of the past, even in the latter cases. Polyandry is not known. The first of the prescribed forms of marriage known to Hindus as *Brahma*, is followed by the community and the procedure is conducted according to the Rig-Vedas. The Brahma form consists in the gift of the daughter clothed in a single robe to a man presumably learned in the *Vedas* whom her father voluntarily invites and respectfully receives, as is done in the *Simānt-pujan* described above. This is the reason why the 'boundary-reception' is kept up even when the bridegroom has to cross no boundary. In practice, the element of selection of the girl and of the boy, does take place in a way.

The course of the least resistance policy is in evidence, love-marriages as such are considerd ultra-radical, and it is believed that if the bride starts with a liking for the bridegroom, she, like a creeper* growing near a tree, twines herself round him, and raises her head in course of time to the skies fully enveloping

* See ceremony called *Amba* infra.

him in her embrace with the help of the babe-tendrils that grow out of her. Love comes by culture, and proves productive of home-blessings by culture. Mutual toleration, under the strong belief that a marriage is an indissoluble union, predestined, and preordained, even during future births or future residence in Indra's heaven is the key that "opes" the portals of love, in the heart of the parties concerned. No divorce is possible, and no other husband must ever be thought of. Turning to the important prescribed ceremonies, we find the following is the regular list:—

(1) *Vāgnischaya*, *i.e.*, settlement by word.

(2) *Simāntpujan*, *i.e.*, reception and adoration of the bridegroom at the entrance of the town.

(3) *Vadhugrihagaman*, *i.e.*, going to the place of the bride.

(4) *Madhuparka*, *i.e.*, a respectful offering made to a guest and the bridegroom on his arrival at the door of the father of the bride.

(5) *Parasparnirikshan*, *i.e.* the ceremony of gazing at each other through the screen called "Antarpat" and of garlanding the bridegroom by the bride.

(6) *Kanyādān*, *i.e.*, the ceremony of giving away the girl in marriage.

(7) *Vivāhahoma*, *i.e.*, offering oblations by throwing ghi into the consecrated fire in honour of the marriage.—

(*a*) *Pānigrahana*, *i.e.*, ceremony of taking by hand.

(*b*) *Lājāhoma* throwing parched grains into the consecrated fire.

(*c*) *Saptapadi*, *i.e.*, the ceremony of the bride and bridegroom walking together seven steps round the sacred fire, after which the marriage becomes irrevocable.

The *Vivāhahoma* ending in *Saptapadi* is the operative and essential portion of the ceremony. On completion of the last

step the actual marriage is considered to be complete. While using the Brahma form the Prabhus have retained certain special customary observances which go to prove or rather to keep in remembrance of their "Kshatriya," origin such as :— (1) The marriage of the Prabhu must necessarily be in a *Mandap* (pendal), and in the presence of all relations and friends like the *swayamwar* in a *Sabha* of the olden Kshtriya period whereas Brahmans perform their marriages in the inner part of the house. (2) Two unsheathed swords are crossed over the head of the couple from behind.

(1) The actual *Vāgnischaya* has already taken place in the instance under observation. The religious ceremony must, however, be repeated. At first the *Deva-prasth* (Sanskrit, god-enthroning) has to be performed thus :—It includes *Swasti-vāchana* alias *Punyāhvāchana*, and is intended for obtaining the blessings of the gods for the successful performance of the ceremony. Ganesh is at first worshipped, then two potsful of water are placed on heaps of rice; one represents Varuna, the God of Rain, and the other all the other gods and sacred rivers and oceans. They are worshipped and the *puja* concludes with the blessings of the priests who keep repeating: (1) *Om Punyāham*—May this day be a record of good deeds: (2) *Om ayushmati Swasti*—May the long-lived be blessed: (3) *Ridhyatām*—May there be "plenty." (4) *Om astu shri*—May wealth be in profusion. (5) *Shānti rastu*—May there be peace. (6) *Pushtirastu*—May there be health. (7) *Tushti-rastu*—May there be contentment. (8) *Avighnamastu*—May there be freedom from evils and (9) *Sarvārth Sidhirastu*—May all the desires be fulfilled. All these are vociferated in Sanskrit, to give them as much gravity as possible, the worshippers (the father and mother, and the bride and bridegroom in each house) bowing to the Brahmans as each blessing reaches their ears. Priests make a grand show of it with the expectation of *dakshna* (alm in cash).

MĀTRIKĀPUJAN.—This is a worship of the spirits of the mortal and immortal mothers. They are in this case 23. A

winnowing-basket is covered with a piece of cloth, and a row of handfuls of rice is arranged in it naming each after the mother it is supposed to represent, and duly worshipped.

NĀNDISHRĀDHA.—It is also called *Abhudayika* or *Vridhi-Shrādha*, and consists of the worship of the ancestors of the bride or bridegroom in each house. They are named in due form and oblations are offered by the worshipper who is generally the father of the party in each case. The ancestors named are nine in number (1) mother, (2) grandmother, (3) great-grandmother, (4) father, (5) grandfather, (6) great-grandfather, (7) maternal grandfather, (8) maternal great-grandfather, (9) and maternal great-great-grandfather. This *Shrādh* materially differs from the anniversary *Shrādhas*. Here the ancestors are not named separately, *Yadnopavita* or the sacred thread (called *Janoi* in the north) has not to be transferred from the left to the right shoulder (this change is called *apasavya*). Instead of the black *Til* (or *Sesamum Indicum* or Gingelly seed), the white *Java* barley (*Hordeum hexastichon*) must be offered. Instead of *Swadhā* the word *Swahā* must be used, instead of *Sa-patnikah* the word "*Patni-sahitah*" must be used. *Swadhā* and *Swahā* both mean "I offer" and *Sa-patnikah* and *Patni-sahitah* both mean "I and my wife." These details though tedious are given here to show an interesting feature of the Hindu priestcraft. One set of words indicate ancestor-worship at death and other inauspicious occasions, and the other the same worship at a marriage or similar auspicious ceremonies. A discontented priest who is not satisfied with the cash given to him, plays mischief by using one expression for the other, other priests point out the mistake, a row takes place, a *Grāmmanga* or boycott results, and the poor victim of a father has to spend more money in performing a *Shānti* (peace-making ceremony). All the humbugs about the *Vedoktās* and *Puranoktās* are discussed, the right of the worshipper to a certain form are hotly demanded by outwardly contending and secretly co-operative societies, and money extorted. Luckily in the case under observation there was no such chance

because the parents of the parties were themselves educated and knew well their own parts.

Grihamakha.—This is a worship of the *Adityās,* the 'suns' and of other heavenly bodies intended to please them and to solicit the favour of their remaining at the auspicious compartments of the astrological diagrams. A wooden low stool (*Chaurang*) is covered with cloth and little handfuls of rice coloured according to the 'likes' of the planets are arranged. They are then topped over with betelnuts to represent the planets and worshipped in the presence of the *Vedic* fire called "*homa.*"

MANDAPA-DEVATĀ-PRATISHTHA.—Literally it is the enthronement of the gods of the marriage-bower. *Avighna-Ganapati,* or "obstacle-removing-Ganesh is of course worshipped at first. *Durva*-grass (*Cynodon dactylon*), *Shami*-leaves (*Prosopis Spiciqera*) etc., are wrapped up in mango-leaves and tied lengthwise with a hand-spun cotton thread. Six such bundles are taken. Each is called *Shākhā;* one contains a model of the rice-pounding beam or a piece of the branch of some sacred tree, called *Samidha.* In another, the model of a knife (or a blade of the *Darbha*-grass as a substitute is enclosed. All these bundles are placed in a newly made winnowing basket, lying south to north. The four which contain no special symbols are placed first one after another; to their north the one containing the symbol of the pounding beam (*Musalgarbhā*) and to its north the one containing symbol of a knife (*S'astragrabhā*). A small earthen pot painted white and covered with a lotus-bud-shaped lid and filled up with coloured rice, turmeric tubers, betelnuts, and tied with hand-spun cotton-thread is then placed in the winnowing basket. It is called *avighna-Kalasha* (*lit.* the obstacle-removing-pot). The six bundles tied in mango-leaves represent from south to north Goddesses Nandini, Nalini, Maitrā, Umā, Pashuvardhini, and Bhagavati, and the pot represents Ganesh. They are worshipped and the first four are placed in the four corners of the marriage-bower, and the fifth is tied to the central

pillar and worshipped again. But in practice they are allowed to remain in the basket and worshipped *in situ* here. The topmost bundle representing Bhagavati in Sanskrit or Bhavāni in Marāthi should alone have been enthroned, but now-a-days all the bundles are carried to the "God's room" by the father, and the pot representing Ganesh by the mother. The parents of the bride or bridegroom walk up to the room together with their respective charges and place them in front of a square patch on a wall to the *Ishānya* (N. E). Here an interesting comparison between the masonic practice of placing a foundation stone in a North-East direction may be made to trace the Universal Unity of belief in certain ceremonies. (1 *The Mandap Devatās*, (2) the *Bhagavati* (Bhavāni) and the (3) Ganesh form distinct groups and therefore although the first two are placed in one basket, *three* rice-heap-seats must be arranged for them. The basket is placed on two of them and the Ganesh on the third, each set has thus a separate throne! All these details are very tedious, each has its own Sanskrit *Mantra* (recitation) and each takes a deal of time. At last the tired-out parents of the hero or heroine of the ceremony are seated on a set of low stools covered with woollen blankets or *shawls* and are themselves honoured by their relations. Sets of clothes, each set containing a turban and a *dupatta* for the father a *sāri* and bodice-piece for the mother, and a turban or bodice-piece (according to sex) to the bride or bridegroom are given by friends and relations. This honour unto the hosts is called *Aher*. Brahmans, married-women, friends, relations, and caste-people are then given a banquet. All these take up the whole of the day previous to the marriage. But that is not all. If the parents of the party are rich, Brahmans "advise" that certain number of *Anushthāns*, propitiatory ceremonies, should be performed *through* the priests in the several temples of the town, each dilating on the power, influence, fame, and sanctity of the one he chooses, gets from Rs. 1 4-0 to Rs. 15 and goes home to propitiate the town-gods, with devotion and blessings in proportion to the amount received. One amusing

feature of these ceremonies is the constant frown or smile of the knowing father according to his devotion to texts or otherwise. He is personally anxious to get over the whole marriage affair smoothly, but when he finds the priests diverting or misleading in the minutest details, he,—if superstitious and punctilious—frowns, and,—if civilized,—smiles. The priests watch his face and manipulate details accordingly !

VĀGDĀN OR VĀGNISCHAYA is the name of the first ceremony which directly affects the relation of a marriageable girl with a marriageable boy or young man. All that takes place previous to the *Vāgdān* is merely preparatory. In this ceremony the father of the girl verbally gives away saying in Sanskrit *Vāchā datta, mayā Kannya*, literally, I have verbally given away my daughter. In the second half, the father of the bridegroom repeats in Sanskrit, *Vāchā dattā twayā Kanya*, that is, "your daughter you have verbally given away to my son," and therefore this portion is called *Vāgnischaya*, lit. *Verbal settlement*. This double-named ceremony may take place on any auspicious day but as it is one of the important functions, the nearer the actual marriage it is performed the better. As any accident in the families concerned, is thereafter attributed to the bad luck of the bride or bridegroom it is not advisable to leave any space of time between the two. If the marriage is fixed in the morning this ceremony is gone through on the evening of the day previous, if in the evening, it is performed on the same day of the marriage. But let us see what is done. The father of the bridegroom, accompanied by his family priest, his male and female relations and friends, and taking with him trays containing clothes, ornaments, sweets and cocoanut etc., for the *Oti*, goes with a band of musicians to the house of the bride's father. Ashvalāyan tells us in the *Grihyasutra*, that the number of people forming the *Vāgnischaya* party should be even, and that a good omen should be observed on arrival at the residence of the bride. Her father receives the party most courteously and takes the male members to the seats on

the carpets and cushions intended for them where on a carpet—a separate seat—is arranged for the bride. She is already dressed and kept ready for the occasion. When everyone is seated, the girl is brought out and asked to take her special seat. Her father sits near her. The father of the bridegroom sits in front of her, offers a *vidā* (two betel-leaves and one entire betelnut) and a cocoanut. Prayers are offered to Ganesh and the family godlings, the *Gotra*, *Pravara*, and three ancestors of the bridegroom are loudly announced. The future father-in-law then adds that in order to become the wife of such a bridegroom, the daughter of such and such a man, the son of so and so, the grandson of so and so, of such and such *Gotra* of such and such *Pravara*, "*Vrinimahe*," that is (I prefer, I select, and ask for). The bride's father then has to leave his seat to go to the zanāna and loudly ask the ladies of his house whether he should accept the offer. On obtaining the consent through a young married lady, he comes out and declares audibly *vrinidhvam* "Do accept please." The same recitation is repeated twice more (three times in all) by the father of the bridegroom, and then at last comes the open declaration of the father of the bride "*pradāsyāmi*" I give (my daughter) also to be repeated twice more (three times in all).

Kānnyapujan.—Honouring the bride. Immediately after this thrice repeated open declaration of the engagement, the bride is offered saffron-paste, coloured rice, a *sāri*, a bodice-piece, jewellery, sweets, *pān*, flowers, *atar*, and the *oti*. The last consists of a cocoanut and grain to be placed in the principal fold of her *sāri* by the future mother-in-law.

The father of the bride now sits so as to keep her to his left facing the east; then after repeating the name of his country, the year, the month, the day of the month as represented by the phases of the moon, etc., says "I now perform the *vedic* ceremony of the *Vāgdān* of my marriageable daughter. He begins by worshipping Ganesh and Varuna. He then offers his own seat to the father of the bridegroom and sits opposite to him facing west and worships him. The worship of the

bride's father by the bridegroom's father in return then takes place. The father of the bride takes five entire tubers of turmeric, five entire betelnuts, betel-leaves sandalwood-paste, and moistened rice on them, repeats the *Gotra*, *Pravara*, and family and three ancestors of the bridegroom, adds the *Gotra*, *Pravara*, and three ancestors of the bride (including himself), and promises again ceremoniously in Sanskrit-chant, that "in the presence of the sacred fire and the Brahmans, I will give in marriage, my daughter to the oft-repeated so and so." These offerings are then tied to the scarf of the bridegroom's father and the knot is worshipped. The same process has to be repeated by the father of the bridegroom, who adds a warning to keep firm in his (bride's father) resolution. Turmeric-tubers and betelnuts have to be similarly tied to the end of the bride's father's scarf and the knot worshipped. The two knots or rather knotted ends of the scarves are then placed between the respective parents who address each other thus :—

Bride's father says :—

Vāchādattā mayā Kanyā putrārtha Svikritā tvaya, Kanyāvalokan vidhau nischitatsvam Sukhibhava.

वाचादत्ता मया कन्या पुत्रार्थ स्वीकृता त्वया ।
कन्यावलोकन विधौ निश्चितस्त्वं सुखीभव ॥

i.e., "My daughter whom I offer for your son to wife, has been accepted by you. You have finally settled the work of looking out for a bride for your son. Be at ease. Be happy."

The bridegroom's father says :—

Vāchādatta tvaya Kannyā Putrārtham Swikrita mayā Varāvalokana vidhau nischitasvam, Sukhi bhava.

वाचादत्ता त्वया कन्या पुत्रार्थ स्वीकृता मया ।
वरावलोकन विधौ निश्चितस्त्वं सुखीभव ॥

i.e., "Your daughter you promised for my son has been accepted. The work of looking out for a husband for your daughter is finally over. Be at ease. Be happy." The father-in-law is now offered a gold

bordered shawl worth about Rs. 250. The Brahmans repeat a blessing after worshipping Shachi, the wife of Indra, and the bride is made to repeat in Sanskrit a prayer in which the goddess is asked to carry the marriage ceremony to a successful end, to grant her good luck and good sons. As soon as the prayer is finished some of the married girls wave lights in front of the bride and wish her all joy and success, under the blessings of Ganesh and Varuna. The Brahmans and the guests assembled are then offered the usual *pān-supāri, atar*, etc., and the women cocoanuts in addition ; and the bridegroom's party return home amidst loud blessings sung by the Indian Musician's band.

On this occasion it is customary for both the contracting parties to steep their hands in a solution of saffron and to impress their marks on the coat, (which is always white), of the gentleman *vyāhi*, in the region of the chest. It seems to have some connection with sealing the contract. What in these days is known as finger-marks, or in mediæval India was actually impressed on important documents and *sanads*, has possibly survived in this ceremony. On the wall in the Malvan fort built in Shivāji's time, he has impressed his palm on the uppermost layer of the cement and that mark is still shown to all visitors interested in archæological remains. Practice thus survives in religious custom !

VARAPRASTHĀN OR KANYĀ-GRIHĀGAMANA.—There are three kinds of auspicious moments for a marriage (1) day-time, (2) evening twilight, and (3) night. Although the Shāstras proclaim that Brahma marriages should be performed during day-time, many Brahmans themselves do not observe the rule, more punctilious people keep to the custom, because the chief god of the Aryans as mentioned in their *Gāyatri-mantra* is the sun in whose presence it is considered preferable to perform the ceremony. Before going to invite the bridegroom the ladies have some rites to perform. They are not given in the *Shatras* but custom is more powerful. One of them is the *ghāna*, consisting of the pounding, grinding, and mixing, of a composition called *chiksa*, cosmetic. It contains wheat *jwāri*,

rice, turmeric, *kāchri* a fragrant tuber, saffron, and other perfumes. Five women who are not married to a widower and who have sons born to them are selected. They help the bride and the bridegroom (in their respective houses separately) in pounding, grinding, and mixing up this cosmetic, accompanied by songs. They take two pieces of cloth coloured yellow, in each are placed and tied up into a knot an entire betelnut and the branched tuber of turmeric. It is curious that the branched tuber is called *lekurvāle* (mother). With one of these pieces they bind together two rice-pounding beams. Then this "pair" of beams is ornamented with mango-leaf and flower-wreaths. With the other piece of yellow cloth the mouth and the handle of the grinding mill, are wrapped up. A cylindrical bamboo basket containing five *shērs* of wheat and *jwāri* is placed in front of the hero or the heroine as the case may be, and pounded. It is necessarily no pounding, but only an imitation of the operation. Songs are sung by the girls, handfuls of the grains are then put into the mill and ground up. Then a young pair newly married, is selected and the eyes of the young husband are tied with a new turban and he is made to sit in front of a pounding stone, his bashful wife is made to stand near him, they are asked to hold the pounding beams, a cocoanut is placed in the mortar and the blindfolded husband is asked to break the nut. His wife helps him in directing the stroke, but if they fail, loud laughter follows. If they succeed only a smile from the young ladies and girls greets the young husband. He is given the turban in any case and his wife is given a bodice-piece. Turmeric powder, saffron powder, *oti*, etc., to the married ladies and girls assembled terminates this ceremony.

USHTI HALAD.—Literally "refuse turmeric" that is, "refuse cosmetic" is the next ceremony. Three low stools are put in a row, and covered with a blanket. On it zigzag lines are marked with rice. The bride and her parents are offered these seats. Married women apply perfumed oil to the bodies of the parents, but to that of the bride the cosmetic just pre-

pared is applied, music is kept going. They are bathed with warm water. The parents dress themselves in gold-bordered silk cloths and go to the *Mandap*, marriage-bower. They perform a special worship called *Punyāhwāchan*. Each time the parents or the bride and bridegroom bathe the *swastika* is drawn on the dorsum of the feet with red paste.

The remnant of the cosmetic from the bride's house is taken in procession by the girls to the bridegroom ; this is why it is called *Ushti*, once used, refuse, or cast-away-tumeric !

The Bride.—The application of the cosmetics, perfumed oils, the warm bath, the loose tresses of her hair, the yellow silk cloth she wears at this time, without tucking up the central fold behind, as is usual in the Deccan the loose bodice sewn out of an entire piece of yellow silk without " cut " worn inside-out, (*ulti*) the whole forehead covered with red powder, the pearl, wreaths and flower-wreaths tied across it with perpendicular fringes flowing along the temples as low as the lobes of the ear, the uniform green glass bangles on the wrists, the green necklace interspersed with gold heads and gold coins, the silver toe-rings placed on the second toe, and the fish-shaped (*virodis*) toe-rings on the fourth toe, complete a figure unique enough and pleasant enough in the eyes of the beholders. Thus dressed for the most momentous moment of her life the bride joins her parents in the bower to perform the *Punyāhavāchan*. By this time the *Ushti-halad* (refuse cosmetics) reaches the house of the bridegroom. There, the bathing ceremony described in the bride's house is repeated in the midst of music and jokes from the girls, and the bridegroom and his parents are dressed for the *Punyāhavāchan* ceremony. The bridegroom is dressed in a silk-and-gold *pitāmbar* and a shawl, and the pearl-and-flower forehead-wreaths. Both the sides are thus ready, in their own houses.

Punyāhavāchan is also called *Swastivāchan*, and is intended as a blessing-procuring ceremony. Ganesh and Varun are worshipped (*vide supra*).—As this worship is oft repeated its description need not be given over again.

Varaprasthān.—Departure of the bridegroom. The auspicious moment is approaching, time is short, ceremonies are multifarious, the priests are busy expediting everything, the girls are busy going backwards and forwards from one *mandap* to the other, with one thing or another, the bands of musicians are multiplied to meet the numerous requirements of the time, the young boys and girls are divided into parties in charge of specified deputations to and from the bridegroom's house, and everybody is too busy to look to anything else besides the work assigned to him or her. The *mūla* or invitation procession is being formed. Everybody is dressed, model "gardens" made of paper, precede royal horses with embroidered saddles follow —held by the *motaddārs* in full dress, and conducted in a peculiar prancing gait, but nobody rides. Next come at a respectable distance, fully caparisoned elephants with gold and silver *howdahs*, in which little children are seated, then bands of musicians take their rank followed by bands of dancing girls; then follows the particular horse selected for the bridegroom and ridden by a brother of the bride who acts the host in this invitation, because his parents are busy performing the religious ceremonies. Then *pharāl* or breakfast in a number of large trays carried by married maid-servants and containing pastry, fruits, and everything that the ingenuity of the ladies can devise.

With this *pharāl*, *rukhvat*, breakfast, and invitation combined, there is a display of the silver and other pots to be presented to the bridegroom as follows :—

Pure silver.

	Worth Rs.
Silver *lota*	100
Water cup	30
Plate	100
5 *Vātis* (cups)	50
Stand or teapoy for silver plate . . .	250
Chain and plate for the sandalwood paste (*gandha*)	15
Tabak, embossed plate for *pān* . . .	100
Incense-burner shaped like a tree . . .	250
	995

German silver.

A large *parāt* about 3½ feet in diameter, a bathing-pot, *ghangāl*, about two feet in diameter and eighteen inches in height, a large pot, *ghāgar*, for carrying water, another large pot, *handa*, for storing water, half a dozen cooking pots, five *lotās* for bathing, etc., and an assortment of little things of the total value of Rs. 300 to Rs. 400.

Brass pots.

Of brass pots there is also a set worth Rs. 100 or so. The total amount required fitting up this set comes to about Rs. 1,500. But in spite of the riches of the bridegroom there is one plate made of an alloy, *kāse*, made up of copper, tin, lead, and other metals. It is indispensable. It is a sort of bronze held indispensable in the fire-worship. It is in this plate that the lamps shaped out of flour mixed with turmeric are placed and carried by a maidservant. It is in this plate that the offerings of the sacred fire are held.

It is necessary to keep in this group a maidservant holding in a silver tray a pair of lamps made of flour mixed with powdered turmeric. The wicks are made of black rags. These lamps are possibly intended to ward off the effects of evil eyes. Now comes the motley group of ladies and bridesmaids all dressed in full and wearing a coverlet of shawl or sash, fully embroidered, and often gaudily coloured. Many of them hold dainty little trays of the *rukhavat* or pastry, specially prepared for the bridegroom, in addition to the large quantities in charge of the maid-servants. A perforated cylindrical silver basket about a foot in diameter, used as a sieve for washing rice, and called *rovali*, is held by the best of the bridesmaids. It contains coloured rice topped over by a silver lamp called *lāmandivā* and provided with a heavy chain. It is a hanging lamp. This lamp is filled with *ghi* and not oil as is usual. It is the greatest care of the lady to see that the lamp is not blown out by the wind. Such an accident would be considered a bad omen. Her serious face, and her great solicitude in protecting

the flame form an interesting feature in the eyes of an ethnographist, in the midst of the hurly-burly of a long procession extending over nearly quarter of a mile. Great responsibility, great wait, overwhelming anxiety, great care in avoiding pushes or thrusts from the unwieldy crowd intermixed with unruly spectators, all weigh very heavily on the fair custodian of the sacred lamp. Her friends (some of the women of the party), guard her, watch her every step, and startle at every whisk of the flame. After the ladies, follow the gentlemen and the boys and last of all the orherlies and servants.

In spite of the oredr in which the procession should thus be formed, servants, spectators, visitors, and even pickpockets will be detected interspersed, but one man who walks by the side of the horse on which the brother of the bride is seated cannot be mistaken. He holds a tray containing a full dress for the bridegroom. A turban duly folded worth about Rs. 25, an embroidered coat worth about Rs. 75, a shawl worth Rs. 125, *pyjama* worth about Rs. 15, a pair of gold embroidered shoes worth Rs. 5, and a cocoanut lined with gold-leaf. Before this grand invitation procession reaches the house of the bridegroom, the mother of the bride has to join it after finishing her *pujās* in the marriage bower, as it is her honour to feed her future son-in-law. She it is who has to put into his mouth with her own hand the first morsel of the best of the specimens of her culinary art. Then follow the other ladies who are closely related to the bride's family, each putting a small quantity into his mouth. He is then asked to bow unto his family-gods, dress himself in the new suit brought by his future brother-in-law, and come out to join the procession, holding in his hand the auspicious gold-lined *shriphala* or cocoanut. He mounts the horse brought for him, a cocoanut is waved over him, broken and thrown away to be picked up by street boys. This is a sacrifice to all the evil spirits that may be present on the spot. As the procession is formed, and as it moves gradually, a cocoanut is waved, broken, and thrown away at every turning or every place suspected as the haunt of an evil spirit. On passing

a temple a cocoanut is also sent to be laid entire before the idol. The progress is necessarily slow and the mother of the bride gets time enough to be ahead to receive the bridegroom at the entrance of the marriage-bower along with her husband. On reaching it the cocoanut offering, and the waving of rice and water to take off the effects of evil eyes are repeated. One of the maidservants of the family pours out a large potful of water in front of the house and gets a *sāri* worth Rs. 5. The chief of the artisans who have constructed the *mandap* gets a turban worth Rs. 10, the bridegroom dismounts, the bridesmaid holds before him the auspicious silver lamp she has all along been in charge of, another young lady holds a *panchārti* or a group of five lamps in a tray as a welcome, the mother-in-law shows a churning rod covered with silk cloth, possibly showing that her house is full of the products of the cow—the chief material for making Indian sweets, the father-in-law holds his right hand and conducts him respectfully to the seat specially provided, and everyone goes to his place in the large *mandaps* and shamianas.

THE BRIDEGROOM'S SEAT.—The seat of the bridegroom is a study. It is in front of the *vedi*, one low stool for him and one for the bride with a convex square platform intervening. This platform which slopes on all sides is about two feet square shaped by the bricklayer with fine clay. It is whitewashed, on it, is drawn a lotus flower with eight petals, called *ashta-dal*. These are possibly the eight points of the compass, or the eight planets with the sun in the centre. Whatever the symbol may mean, it differs from the mere heap of rice found in a Brahman's house on this occasion. As soon as the bridegroom is seated, two seats are provided for the father and uncle for the *Madhupark*, which is a courteous welcome ending in the gift and acceptance of dresses. They are given silk *pitāmbars* with gold-borders worth Rs. 100 or so each. Thus honoured, they retire to welcome the guests who are coming in shoals. The elder son-in-law of the bride's parents is similarly specially honoured and dressed next. The bridegroom is then worshipped as a

pe sonification of Vishnu, the Protector of the Hindu Trinity. The bride's father goes to where his daughter is seated near the *Gauri-Har*, worshipping Annapurna, the faithful wife of Shiva, holding the ladle of plenty and praying "*Gauri, Gauri āyatan de, āni dāri pāhunā ālā āhe tyās Sukhi rākh, i.e.,* "Mother Gauri, do grant me Home—sweet home—and do protect the guest that has just arrived at the gate, I pray." He bows unto his family-godlings and the special godlings enthroned, leaves the place to go to a remote place from where he will not be able to overhear the *mangalāshtakās* or recitations preceding the actual meeting of the pair.

The worship of the bridegroom is performed but the *Kanyādān* is often deferred as the auspicious moment of the *Paraspara nirikshana* is drawing near and the astrologer or Joshi, the most important guide and philosopher at this moment will not brook delay. On either side of the *astadala* or eight-petalled lotus symbol, there are two seats—one is occupied already by the bridegroom. He is asked to stand, a scarf called *antarpat*, literally, the intervening curtain is held in front of him, and the maternal uncle of the bride who has already given her a yellow *sāri* with gold border called *ashtaputali* to wear, on this momentous occasion, is asked to bring her from the *Gauri-Har* where she is praying. It is his right or duty, or call it whatever it may, to bring the bride to the marriage-bower. It may be a vestige of the right of the maternal uncle to accord or withhold his consent to the match and his presence may in olden days have been accepted as his consent. However, as soon as the uncle brings the bride to the bower, she is made to stand on the low stool opposite to that on which the bridegroom stands, and on the other side of the curtain, and asked to look at the filfot cross or *swastik* drawn with red powder paste in its centre. The marriage verses are now chanted by the priests and the pair is asked to recount the names of their family-gods. As each man completes his stanza, coloured rice is thrown over the pair by the *ashtwarga* or eight selected men in charge of the curtain, and other ladies and gentlemen standing near

enough. Many of the married ladies and girls gather behind the *vedi* and many of the young friends and companions gather on the opposite side. One married girl whose husband is present is selected for holding the lump of clay with the branch of the mango tree which adorns the back of the *vedi*. The end of her *sāri* is tied to the end of the scarf of her husband and both are stationed at their post. A few seconds before this auspicious moment approaches the Joshi shouts (*Sāvadhān*) "Attention," and a bugler applies the instrument to his lips all attention for the next signal. The two men who hold drawn swords crossed against each other over the heads of the pair have to be very careful as in the hurry of the moment they may drop the weapon and in sheathing them injure someone. Such is the rush about the spot. The senior of the two, shouts "Attention" and the row of men whose business is to obey him, communicate his orders to the party of soldiers ready with their guns. "*Sāvadhān*" shouts the Joshi a second time "Attention" (*Hushshār*) shouts the A.-D.-C. Once more the names of the family gods are repeated by each party. The "hour cup" kept floating in a large pot of water called *ghadi* which corresponds to the hour-glass of the olden days, is filled up to the brim. *Sāvadhān* "Attention" shouts the Joshi for the last time; *Hushshār*, resounds through the mouth of the guard.

The Joshi then repeats the last verse which means "Oh Lord of Goddess Lakshimi, I recount thy sacred feet. This contemplation (of thy feet) is the only auspicious moment for the marriage, it is the best day, the best conjunction of the constellation, the most favourable conjunction of all the *Vidyās* (learnings), and the most favourable moment of the happy grouping of the fates (*Daivās*). A clap of hands of the Joshi, and down goes the curtain and the bride and the bridegroom look at each other. She puts a wreath of the *calotropis gigantea* flower round his neck, both are made to exchange their places, and to sit down. Simultaneously with the clap of the Joshi's palms, the A.-D.-C. shouts "Fire", and the guard outside gives a volley, the musicians are in no way behind, for,

the man with the flute kept standing near the *vedi* blows it, and all the tom-tom is in full swing in a second. The curtain held between the pair goes to the Joshi. It must be double. Its open end must have been kept to the north, it must have the *swastik* drawn on either side. It is called *antarpat*. The married and unmarried girls standing near have either *kalash*, water-pots, or lamps in their hands as auspicious symbols. They now place them down, and congratulate the bride by applying the water of the "*kalash*" pots to her eyes. They then exchange among themselves the *kalash* (water-pots) and the lamps they hold, go to the interior of the house and restore them to the parties, that is re-exchange them there. Outside the house, the guests are being treated to dancing and music and *pān* and *supāri*, *atar*, *gulāb*, and cocoanuts. The priest gets *dakshina* or cash in addition. The bride's father's agent pays As. 2 each while the bridegroom's side has to pay double, *i.e.*, As. 4 each. Both the voluntary cashiers have a hard task! As soon as the betel-leaves are distributed, the assembled guests come to the *vedi* to see the just-married pair which is held sacred like Lakshmi and Narāyān, her divine husband, and this visit is called *darshana*. On one side of the pair is placed a large tray in which copper and silver coins waved round the pair by the visitors are thrown. This heap forms the perquisite of the priest. The ladies are treated to *pān-supāri*, *atar*, *gulāb*, and *oti* in addition. Flowers are put in their hair. Outside the door of the *zanāna* stands a respected married elderly lady who makes courteous enquiries of the lady-guests as to whether they were given the *pān*, etc., and whether their *oti* (fold of the *sāri*) was full. It is considered a great breach of etiquette to neglect the proper distribution of these things, and therefore outside the *mandap* and shamianas elderly gentlemen including the father and uncle of the bridegroom stand making similar enquiries of all the male guests; even servants and menials are courteously addressed and treated most sympathetically. If one is found without the *pān* and the cocoanut an orderly who is ready with a spare

trayful, or a basketful, has to hand them over to the gentleman-enquirer and he has to offer them to the servants with his own hand to rectify the omission. When all the guests are gone the father and uncle of the bridegroom leave the house with the permission of the hosts—the father and mother of the bride. The volunteer-distributors are then respectfully invited by the host to be seated and thanked for their troubles and are through his juniors treated to the *pān*, *atar*, cocoanut, and flower-garlands just as the guests, they have treated. The father of the girl then goes to where the married pair is sitting [surrounded by the bridesmaids and the bridegroom's companions who have been congratulating them or cracking pleasant jokes at them,] because he has to perform the *Kanyā-dān* (giving away of the daughter) ceremony. What has happened is only the *paraspara-nirikshana* or mutual glance. It is no marriage yet in its religious sense although colloquially this process is called *lagna* (marriage).

KANYĀDĀN therefore is another essential ceremony leading to the completion of the final tie. The priest now sits to the right of the bridegroom facing north, spreads *darbha* grass (*Erogratis cynosuroides*) in front of himself with their tops towards the east, west or north. Then a copper pot is filled with sacred water, and its mouth covered with mango-leaves and *durva* (*Cynodon dactylon*) grass and it is painted with red paste. Nine *mantras* beginning with or "*apohishta*," etc., are repeated over it. The water is now sanctified for the giving away of the daughter "*Kanyādān*." The father of the girl is then made to sit to the right of the bridegroom and the mother to *his* right, facing north. He must tie a knot to the tuft of hair (*shendi*) on his scalp, take the *achmans* or sips of water from his palm, bow unto his gods, repeat the name of his country, the year, month, day, hour, of the occasion, must hold *darbh* * grass and water in his hand and say :—"In order to secure the blessed land of Brahma [the fruit of the meritorious

* Erogratis cynosuroides.

act of giving away a daughter in marriage] for all my ancestors, and in order to purify the twelve ancestors on the paternal and maternal side of the bride and bridegroom, making twenty generations including themselves, in order to please Lakshimi Nārāyan, the God of Gods, I do hereby perform the *Kanyādān* ceremony as prescribed in the Brahman-form ;'' and pours out the water.

After thus pouring out the water of the gift, the father of the girl has to repeat another *mantra* meaning, '' This daughter of mine, full of ornaments and endowed with dower, I offer unto thee, in order to gain admission into Brahma's world taking you to be a personification of Vishnu, the all-pervading Protector. Oh, ye, who pervade the universe, Oh, ye, the five elements, and Oh, ye, all the gods bear witness to the fact that I offer my daughter to this Vishnu-like person for the salvation of my ancestors !''

The priest then places a tray of *kāse* (alloy) on the flour and asks the bridegroom to hold his palms open over it, with the little fingers touching each other so as to form a receptacle, above it, the bride has to hold her folded palms in the same way. The father and mother of the bride stand near the pair in the place of the presiding priest and the father is asked to hold his open palms above those of her daughter and in the same fashion. Thus the receptacle of the folded palms of the (1) bridegroom, (2) the bride, and (3) the father of the bride are held one above the other. The mother of the bride holds in her hand the *lota* containing the sanctified water and pours out a delicate little continuous stream out of it on the uppermost palms, *i.e.*, those of her own husband. It naturally dribbles down on the folded palms of the bride and the bridegroom. While the mother of the bride pours the water, *mantras* like '' *Kanyā tāryatu*, etc.,'' '' *Punyam varahatam*, etc.'' are repeated by the father. He then mentions his *Gotra*, his name and says in Sanskrit that his daughter so and so, who wishes to have a husband, is thus being offered to so and so, the son of so and so, the grandson of so and so of such and such *Gotra*, for the production of

progeny, and requests the bridegroom to accept her. He then pours out water, *darbh* grass, and rice over his right-hand palm (of the bridegroom) out of the hollow of his right-hand palm and adds his blessings "May Prajāpati, Brahma, be satisfied with the gift he is thus religiously making." The bridegroom on hearing this blessing has to say "*Om swasti*," amen! The whole process beginning with "*Kanyā-tāryatu* to "*Om swasti*" has to be repeated thrice in all. The bridegroom then touches the right shoulder of the bride with his left hand, and repeats certain *mantras* meaning "The gentleman performing this *Kanyādān*-ceremony is Brahma himself. He has offered his treasure—his daughter unto me who am also as sacred as Brahma. He wishes to have the credit of this meritorious deed (*Kanyādān*, the gift of his daughter) and I wish to have the credit of performing my manly duties. One wish dictates the gift to the other wish, and therefore the giver is not the father of the girl nor am I yet the husband of the bride. The *wish* of the giver is one and the wish of the receiver another. Help me, Oh Brahma, to fulfil my part of the promise. Oh bride! I accept you as my wife in order to be able to perform my duties in this world, not for carnal pleasures. Oh desire to live a married life! The bride—the treasure is yours. Oh bride! you are like a shower of rain fulfilling all human desires by the production of a good crop. You are thus the panacea for the fulfilment of my desires. May therefore this gentleman, your father, who may be compared to the sky, offer his treasure, who may be compared to the productive Earth, and thus do I accept you (by touching your shoulder with my hand)." He then addresses the father of the bride and says in Sanskrit "In order to promote *Dharma* (religious duty) and to produce children, I accept your daughter." The father replies also in Sanskrit "Oh Bridegroom, I have offered you this daughter of mine, as fair as Goddess Gouri, and as decorated as possible—I mean unto *you*—Mr. so and so, do accept her I pray. He then addresses his daughter the words—"Devi (*i. e.* Goddess) daughter! Do stand like a guardian-angel in front, behind, and on

either side of me, firm in thy resolve to procure eternal freedom in Heaven for me (by thy virtuous conduct)."

He then turns to the bridegroom and says—"Oh bridegroom, I protected and nursed this daughter of mine for eight years with as much fondness as is due to a son. I now give her away to you. May she be the means of increasing your family by the production of sons and grandsons. I enjoin you not to overlook her claims in *Dharma* (religious observances), *karma* (worldly duties) and in the bestowal of *kāma* (conjugal happiness)". The bridegroom responds repeating thrice the promise, "*Nāticharāmi, nāticharāmi, nāticharāmi,*" "I will not, I will not, I will not."

At this moment the father of the bride gives a *dakshina* in cash or kind; he puts on a diamond ring worth Rs. 1,500 on the bridegroom's finger, and offers silver-pots consisting of a *lota*, a cup, a dining dish, nine cups, a sacrificial saucer a (*tāmhan*), a cow, and anything else he can afford repeating a *mantra* at each time on each gift.

A few of them are given here as examples—

(1) "May this silver *lota* help you in washing out the sin of exposing other people's defects or of eating prohibited food."

(2) "May this *kāse* plate (an alloy) help you in cleaning yourself of all sins committed unawares."

(3) "She (the cow) that produces *ghi*, and is the chief help to sacrificial purposes, she who cleanses the world of all sins, may her gift unto thee—the personification of the all-pervading god—prove satisfactory."

(4) "She, the she-buffalo, the most important and recognized partner of Indra, and the guardian of the eight directions, she who is the mother of the Maheshāsur, may she (when given to you) help me in attaining my desires."

(5) "Oh bridegroom, the very image of the Vishnu! I offer you this maidservant, make her do domestic work, make her your housewife, and protect her."

Here is a trace of the "willing slave-trade" historically important. These maidservants were called *dāsis* and kept as co-wives. Under the British rule this gift has become obsolete but the *mantra* is given below in original as an important ethnological survival—

Iyam dāsimayā tubhyam shri-vatsa pratipāditā; Sadā Karmakāri bhogyā yatheshtam bhadramashnute.

(6) "I offer thee she (the Earth personified, *i.e.*, land) who is the prop of all crops, she who was lifted up by Vishnu on his tusk in the *Varāha* (Boar) incarnation (at the time of the great flood), she who yields innumerable kinds of food, grain, fruits, etc. May this gift produce satisfaction in me.

(7) "This house, the chief means of producing 'home-happiness' I offer thee. Accept it and may it afford me satisfaction."

(8) "Oh lamp! Thou art as bright as a constellation of thousands of suns. Oh God of Gods! I bow unto thee. All bright that thou art, may thy gift to this personification of Vishnu himself prove productive of merit."

(9) "I offer you these earrings taken out of the ocean and producing untold of wealth, so that the Goddess Lakshimi may ever smile on you."

(10) "This ring, the creation of Brahma himself, made of gold, this the producer of 'everything one desires' I offer these Oh Lord of the Lotus."

(11) "Oh God Keshava, I offer you this bed fully equipped. May its gift unto thee help me in gaining salvation, *et ad infinitum.*"

SUVARNĀBHISHEKA is the next ceremony. In it, the bridegroom is made to touch the bride under the right arm with his fingers repeating a *mantra* beginning with "*Yatkakshi vāsam*, etc. The sanctified water kept ready by the priest is again purified by an incantation recited over it—it is then poured into a

kāsya (an alloy) pot. In the water thus prepared are dropped, gold, *darbh*, and *durwa* grasses and the fresh leaves of *umbar* (*Ficus glomerata*). It is then sprinkled over the bride while *mantras* are being recited. They begin with (1) *Anha prajām janayatu*, (2) *Samudra jeshtha*, etc., (3) *Apohishtu*, etc.,(4) *Devasyatva*, etc. After thus sprinkling the 'gold-water' (Sanskrit *Suvarnābh'shek*) the pair is made to sit facing each other. Hand-spun double cotton thread moistened with milk is passed four or five times round the neck and waist of one to that of the other, while "*Paritva girvāna*," etc., is being repeated. They are then asked to stand, and the skein formed round their necks is passed downwards round their bodies and legs and then taken out at the feet while the skein formed at the waist is passed upwards round the trunk and taken out over their heads. *Kunkum* is applied to the skeins and they are twisted together like a rope, turmeric-tuber and a little wool are tied to each and each is turned into a *kankana*-wristlet. The cotton-thread wristlet thus formed out of the skein that passed round the necks is tied by the bridegroom to the left-hand wrist of the bride saying "*Nila-lohitam*, etc." The second wristlet similarly prepared out of the threads that passed round the waists of the pair is tied to the wrist of the bridegroom. The first ceremony is called *Sutraveshtan*, thread-wrapping, and the second the *Kankana*-wearing. The tie of these wristlets, accompanied by the *mantras*, is considered as an essential process. That tied to the wrist of the bride indicates according to the *mantras*, an addition to her relations, and that tied round the wrist of the bridegroom signifies his being "chained down" to married life.

Akshatāropan is a ceremony intended for the longevity of the married pair. One pot holds white rice and another milk sprinkled with *ghi*. They are kept thus ready. The bride and the bridegroom are asked to wash their hands to clean them for this ceremony. The bride is then asked to hold her hands together with the palms touching each other and facing the sky. In the hollow thus formed the bridegroom

puts a little of the milk-and-*ghi* mixture, adds a pinch of the rice grains and sprinkles the milk-and-*ghi* mixture over them twice over. While the bride stands in this posture, her father repeats the same process on the folded palms of the bridegroom. Gold is placed over the rice in the hollows of the hands of both (the pair), the bride's folded hands are placed above those of the bridegroom and *mantras* such as "*Kanyātāryatu*, etc." are repeated. It means "I have protected this daughter like a son, etc.,and now offer her to you, etc.," as described above. The bride is then asked to stand and pour the rice and milk-and-*ghi*-mixture over the head of the bridegroom reciting meanwhile the *mantra* "*Bhagome-Kāmhā-samridhyatam*" and "*Yashome-kāmāh samridhatām.*" She is called upon to repeat this operation thrice over with the *mantras* and lastly without them. The bridegroom has to repeat the same ceremony in the same way. At last the bridegroom has to take out a flower and some of the rice placed over his head and to apply them to the forehead of the bride, while she has to do the same. They then place flower wreaths round each other's neck.

The Mangalsutra, sacred necklace.—The bride is then made to sit facing the east and a married lady from the bridegroom's family offers her a gold-embroidered silk-*paithani* or so and a bodice or so and the sacred necklace, *mangalsutra* made of green glass beads, gold beads, and a cup-shaped talisman. She is taken to the *Zanāna*, dressed, and brought back to the bower. The bridegroom then prays unto his gods and ties the necklace round her neck reciting the *mantra : Māngalya tantunānena, bhartujivana hetunā ! Kanthe-bandhām subhage sā jiva shardām shatam.* That is "Oh constant wife, this necklace which increases the longevity of myself, I tie unto thy neck. May you live for a hundred years with me!" In connection with this ceremony a side issue remains to be recorded. The mother of the bridegroom and her immediate lady-relations, accompany the bridegroom to the marriage-bower but without entering it go to the house of a neighbour and sit there because they ought not to see the face of the

bride until the necklace-tying ceremony requires their presence. From the house of the neighbour they "slip away" to their own house. After the marriage-tie, the mother of the bride has to go to the house of the bridegroom with tom-toms and accompanied by lady-friends and relations. There, the mother of the bridegroom is supposed to be cross. She has to be coaxed or "brought round," and induced to go to the marriage-bower. She naturally gets some presents at this time and has to be treated with the greatest consideration and courtesy. At last, she consents, accompanies the bride's mother to her house with some sweets and a gold necklace for her daughter-in-law. It is generally made of fluted gold beads or the *putali*-gold coins. As soon as she reaches the threshold of the bride's house, washings of rice are poured out on the floor. She has to cross these streams. A special triumphal arch of the *Kārle* (*Momordica Charanta*) creeper is kept ready for her and she has to pass under it. The mother of the bride takes her honoured guest to the inner apartments and gives her a green silk *sāri*, and a gold coin in cash as an auspicious offering. She now awaits the arrival in the zanana of her daughter-in-law. As soon as she comes and is dressed as described in the last paragraph, her mother-in-law puts the necklace round her neck as her first greeting at seeing her face (*sun-mukh*) and hands over the conical bundle of sweets. The mother-in-law carefully examines the face (*mukh*). All this has to be done before she is brought to the bower for the *mangalsutra* (sacred-necklace) to be tied. After this the bridegroom gives his wife some more ornaments, repeating *mantras* like "*āyusham varchasyam*," etc. A tray is then taken, five betelnuts, five turmeric-tubers, and five balls of sweets are placed in it, *mantras* addressed to Ganesh and Indra are recited over them, and they are worshipped as representations of Lakshimi, Pārvati, Shachi, and Dākshāyani, the models of female virtue and chastity. The Brahman-priests are given *dakshina* (cash) to satisfy Ganesh. They put the betelnuts and turmeric-tubers on the ends of the dresses of the bride and bridegroom, and tie them together with a knot.

Mantras are of course repeated at each operation. The parents of the bride apply coloured rice grains to the foreheads of the pair and bless them. The elders of the family of the bride do the same. The female models of virtue just mentioned are again worshipped and the bride is made to distribute *Vāyanas* (basketsful of toilet perquisites with cocoanuts and bodice-pieces) to her married lady-friends. The bride and bridegroom are made to worship Dākshāyani and to offer oblations in the commencement of the ceremonies to be performed together in honour of the marriage for four days thenceforward. During this ceremony they are made to imagine themselves in the places of Rohini and Chandra or Venus and the Moon—the symbolical loving celestial pair which is seen tattooed on the foreheads of Hindu girls.

The marriage-fire [Vivāhahoma].—The bridegroom has to hold the bride, to conduct her hand-in-hand to the *Vedi* or altar prepared for the sacred fire. He has then to sit on a low stool facing the east. The priest tells the bride to pass by the west of the altar, to ascend it by the north, and to sit to the right of the bridegroom. The Sutrakārs say after thus ascending the altar the bride must not speak (Sanskrit *Niyamit vacham vadhumanya*). But this restriction naturally forces itself on the girl, as she is by custom or etiquette quite silent during the whole process out of modesty. The bridegroom begins by sipping the sacred water twice and then mentioning the country and the time of the worship. He offers an oblation which means "In order to attain for the bride just given to me the position of a wife duly married, and to prepare the *'homa' fire*, I do prepare this marriage-fire," beginning with the preparation of the receptacle and ending with the installation of the God of Fire. Near the clay-receptacle and to its west, is placed a slab used for preparing sandal-wood-paste, to the north-east is placed a *kalash* or water-pot full up to the brim, over a heap of rice covered over with mango-leaves, and a cocoanut. It is decorated with red powder, sandal-wood-paste and flowers. To the north of the fireplace

are placed seven pinchfuls of rice running east to west. The bridegroom then holds in his hand a couple of the *samidhās* or faggots (taken from sacred trees) and recites the *mantras* including the mention of his country, and the time, etc., of the performance, and a general offer-giving incantation. It includes the thrice repetition of the ceremonies, under contemplation, such as (1) igniting the fire thrice ; (2) offering *ghi* to *Agni*, the God of Fire, and *Prajāpati*, the Creator then (3) offering parched rice to *Aryamāgni*, *Varunāgni*, *Pushpāgni*, *Prajāpati*, and *Svishttra Kritagni* with the remnants. To the north of the fireplace is kept ready a winnowing horse shoe-shaped basket containing parched rice (*lāhyā*), and *ghi* forms an important item. It has to be heated, and ceremoniously sprinkled over the parched rice thrice over. As soon as the preparations are over, the bride is asked to touch the right hand of the bridegroom to signify her taking part in the ceremony, and the bridegroom is made to ignite first the *adhār-homa*, accessory fire, and then the chief fire, and then accompanied by incantations or *mantras* such as "(*a*) Oh sacred fire ! the protector of our life, pray give us food and power, and kill the *Rākshasas* that annoy us even before they reach us. (*b*) We both ask for wealth from the Pāvaman—Fire, who is the fulfiller of the desires of the Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaishya, Sudra, and Antyaja (untouchable) tribes, who is omniscient, who purifies everybody, who has been placed in front by the *Rïtvïjās*, and who is praised by gods. (*c*) Oh Agni ! you are a benefactor. Pray endow us with valour and lustre and sons along with cows and buffaloes. (*d*) Oh Devourer of Sacrifices ! as you are the *Aryamā* or the giver of the girl, as you are the holder of the name *Vaishvānar* unintelligible to those who are ignorant of the Vedas, and, Oh Aryamāgni ! as it is you who make the bride and bridegroom work amicably together, and as therefore you are their benefactor or friend, therefore you are thus enthroned and fed with *ghi* and other offerings."

After the worship of the fire with the *Vedic mantras* the bridegroom is made to stand in front of the bride facing west,

he is called upon to hold in his hand the open hand of the bride with the palm upwards. He is asked to grasp it along with the fingers and to recite a *mantra* meaning "Lady! you are about to make me your husband, to live with me until we grow old, and therefore in order to propitiate your married state, I thus hold your hand. You have been lawfully handed over to me by gods—Bhang, Aryamā, Savitu, and Pusha—in order to perform the duties of a pair of householders." Then the bride and bridegroom resume their seats. The bride is then asked to stand again, to wash her hands, and to hold them together to make a hollow. A little *ghi* is sprinkled over the palms. Her brother comes forward and puts into the hollow two handfuls of the parched rice. The bridegroom is made to sprinkle *ghi* over them. The bridegroom has to repeat the mantra "*Aryamān-nudevam*," etc., and while doing so to hold with both the hands the hollow formed by the bride and to make her pour the parched rice into the sacred fire. The *mantra* means:—"The bright sacred fire called *Arayamā*, who has been satisfied with offerings by many brides, may he (personified) reduce the affections the bride bears unto her father, mother, brothers and others, and release her from her *gotra*, and may he direct her affections towards my mother, father, and brothers; may he increase the affection by degrees, and may he infuse into her the spirit of love, fidelity, and chastity towards me without ever discarding my *Kula* family." The bride has next to stand behind the bridegroom, and to pass her hands in front of him as if in embrace to go round the fire with him, the husband reciting another *mantra* meaning:—"Oh lady! I am like the *Sāma-veda* and you are like the *Rig-veda*, I am like the sky and you are like the earth. We both in the presence of this sacred fire and these Brahmans will marry each other, procreate children and endear ourselves to each other by good behaviour, and will live happily together for one hundred years." The bride is then asked to stand on the stone; while she is doing so the bridegroom recites another *mantra* which says, "Oh bride! do ascend this stone and let yourself be as

firm in mind as the stone itself. Conquer your enemies by good deeds.'' Another offering of the parched rice follows, and another ascent to the stone is performed, repeating the process thrice ; finally the bridegroom has to hold the winnowing basket with its open face or the horns of its horse-shoe-shaped rim towards him, and to pour the remnants into the fire saying ''*Prajāpataiswha,*'' etc.

The brother of the bride touches the right ear of the bridegroom, possibly to remind him that he is forgotten, and he is honoured with a turban.

Saptapadi.—The proverb ''*saptapadena maitri,*'' that is, he or she who walks seven footsteps along with us becomes our friend, has its origin in the seven *dharmas* which he acquires by so doing. An intimate friend is therefore called ''*Saptapadin.*'' This ceremony will illustrate the meaning. The bride has to be taken round the fire placing her foot over the seven little heaps of rice already placed to the north of the fire in the last ceremony. As she places her right foot on each, the bridegroom has to recite a *mantra* meaning '' (1) Oh bride, you have walked one step with me, so we are friends. Be my food-giver (Annapurna, by cooking nice dainties), remain attached to me. We shall get many sons. May God make them live for one hundred years. (2) Oh bride, you have walked two footsteps with me. Do increase my strength (by co-operation). We shall get many sons, etc. (3) You have walked three paces. Be unto me the increaser of my wealth (by co-operation). We shall get many sons. (4) You have walked four paces with me. Be the source of increase of happiness unto me. We shall get, etc. (5) You have walked five paces. Be the source of increase of my progeny. We shall get etc. (6) You have walked six paces with me. We have therefore become constant friends inseparable. We shall get,'' etc.

The husband and wife (no longer bride and bridegroom) are then made to touch each others' foreheads by the priest who presses the heads forward, and water from the *kalash*, placed at the north-east of the fire, is sprinkled over their heads by

the presiding priest with blessings. The sacred fire is again worshipped conjointly by the newly-married husband and wife, a small particle of its ashes are applied to their foreheads as a *prasād*, the gift which marks the end of the fire-worship.

Dhruva darshana.—Looking at the polar star Dhruva. All along the *Saptapadi* the husband and wife have the ends of their clothes tied together with a knot. This knot is now loosened and they are asked to look at the polar star at night or at the sun during the day, when the bride is called upon to say "*Jivapatni prajām Videya*,—I wish long life to my husband and children to ourselves." She was stopped from uttering any word during the whole process. She is now free to do so.

The first breakfast.—The day's work is done, and now the husband and wife have to be given their first breakfast. For this purpose the bridesmaid and the bridegroom's companions are invited. All young folk of nearly the same age with the pair, and all younger still, gathered in both the houses are courteously invited. It is the paramount duty of the bridegroom to see that none of his friends and relations are left out by oversight. Two rows of low stools are arranged facing each other leaving a passage in-between, and room enough for the plates. In front of the stools are drawn in stencil and coloured powders elaborate designs called *rāngolis* consisting of powdered calcspar and red coloured flour *gulāl*. At one end of the row facing the east, and at right angles to it, a subsidiary 'arch' in drawing is reserved for the bride's seat as she has to take her food from the same plate with her husband. The silver plate, cups, saucers, *lota*, incense-burners, etc., given to the bridegroom at the *Kanyādān* are placed artistically in their own places interspersed with foliage drawings according to taste. All the other plates are duly arranged with due consideration of the position of the proposed occupant, dainties are served in small quantities. This is the Kindergarten-*menu* of the feast. The bridegroom is then courteously asked to wash his hands and feet for the breakfast by the brother of the bride with folded hands, as he is resting in the bower after the completion

of the sacred duties. An elderly gentleman stands at the head of the rows and takes each member to his seat as he enters the hall after the wash and after changing the cotton dress for a silk *pitāmbar*. To the right of the bridegroom are seated his brothers and cousins according to rank. On the opposite row facing the bridegroom's sit the chief girls of the bride's house heading the *pangat* (row) as they say. When all are seated, the mother of the bride steps forward with a silver pot-ful of liquid *ghi* and pours out a few drops on the right hand palm of the bridegroom. He drinks it : this process is repeated thrice. A ring is generally given to the son-in-law at this time. The breakfast begins with music. To increase the hospitality of the bride's family, some of the young men stand in attendance, and add to the number of lights or incensed sticks in front of each of the members, either according to rank or according to the estimation in which each is held. But among such youngsters it is difficult to expect seriousness and they often go on cracking jokes with friends and equals of the opposite party by adding these marks of honour indefinitely. All enjoy, all laugh. Elders do not take any part while this fun is in full swing, some married lady conducts the bride to her seat to the left of her husband and on a seat placed at a right angle to his. As soon as the bride is seated, her friends ask the bridegroom to give her some of the sweets to eat in a separate corner of the silver plate, and to put five mouthfuls into her mouth. The bride is also made to put five mouthfuls of the choicest sweets into his month. But the fun continues for some time as the bridesmaids and the bridegroom's companions pretend by turns that they have not seen them doing so. Sometimes they would add, "Oh ! that is not a nice thing to feed one's bride with. Better take such-and-such pastry and put that into her mouth." or "Look here ! that lady so and so was busy, she has just come to the window to see you feeding your wife (or husband) as the case may be. There she waits, better put something nice into her (or his) mouth." This is considered a very happy moment by a bride's mother. She

watches the process from behind the doorway. Whenever the bride's turn of feeding her husband comes, she feels so shy that her maids have to encourage her and prompt her with pushes in the sides and ribs, each action producing immense mirth among the young folk. Then the bride and the bridegroom are left undisturbed and the companions and maids are all pressed to continue their breakfast. After finishing it everyone is given *pān*, *atar*, *gulāb*, etc. From among the bridegroom's companions one or two are requested to stay with him and the rest return home. Then follows the dinner which is an ordinary banquet, but the bride and the bridegroom have to sit on a joint plate to honour the *pangat*, even if they have no appetite, so soon as an hour or two after the so-called breakfast.

PARATNĀVAL.—The next ceremony is called *Paratnāvala* or return visit. It is customary to continue marriage festivities for four days, to worship the sacred fire for that period, and to take the bride finally to her new home in a *varāt*, but in order to avoid the continuous stay of the bridegroom in the house of his father-in-law, it is customary to make him return to his house with his bride for a few minutes on the evening of the marriage-day as no *muhurta* or auspicious moment need be found out on that day. For this purpose torches, lights, lamps, and bands are gathered together to line the street as well as to accompany the party. Elephants, horses, palanquins, and all the state-paraphernalia are kept in waiting. Friends, neighbours, and relations are invited. After a short prayer and worship of the sacred fire by the bride and the bridegroom, and a dinner, they are taken to the house of the bridegroom's father; there made to go through a short ceremony and brought back to the house of the bride's father where they rest for the night—the bride among the girls and the bridegroom among his friends and companions. It is generally in the small hours of the next morning that the first day's ceremony enable the working portion of the household to take a little rest.

THE SECOND DAY.—On the second day of the marriage, as soon as the bridegroom rises, he has to go to the *Gaurihar* or the

gods, etc., and to pick up the silver image of Annapurna (the Goddess of Plenty) which the bride was found worshipping when he entered the marriage-bower the previous day, and to go home. That image is the symbolical acquisition of a wife who would be a good housewife to him. At about eight o'clock a party of boys and girls of the bride's house has to go to the house of the bridegroom with the bride to invite him to her father's house. When they reach the bridegroom's house, he at the sound of the tom-tom disappears! Hides himself. The bride is, on arrival, asked to find out her lord if she can. She has then to go round the whole of the house in search of her husband amid the laughter of the young folk that gather round to mislead and mock her. "Not there, not there—Rāni Laksmi! Oh, where could he have gone—the truant," adds another. "Try that room," suggests another. She goes and is again disappointed. "Try the left." "Try the barn." "Try his bookshelf." They pour out suggestions after suggestions. If he be discovered, the bride is praised for her tact; if not, she is made to promise that she would bow unto him and pray him to come out of his lurch. She does so, he comes out of a rolled up bed or some such device. She is asked to hold him by the hand and to conduct him to his seat with all honour and humility, in the principal hall or marriage-bower. Then she is asked to sit opposite to him, while he reclines himself against a cushion. The companions and maids of honour separate themselves into parties. The bridegroom's party brings out a trayful of betelnuts and *pāns*, the bride's party place the one they have brought with them and the "game of betels" begins. The bridegroom takes a handful, places his fist in front of the bride and says "*Eki-kā-beki*" (odd or even ?) After some hesitation and a number of promptings from her maids, she says one thing or other. The fist is opened, the betels are counted, and if the guess of the bride is correct, her friends seize the lot amidst shouts of laughter. If not, the bridegroom's companions arrange them into pairs and demand as many betelnuts as the pairs the lot contains. The bride-

groom, if he has lost the game, has lost his turn as well, and the bride brings out a handful to repeat the process, and if he has gained, he continues doing so. This game of *eki-beki* is watched with immense interest by the youngsters and the ladies of the house who keep peeping through the doors and windows. At last the party that takes possession of the whole stock of the other party declares itself the winners, and the next game of "hiding" a betelnut begins. In this game a single nut is hidden by the bride and the bridegroom in her or his dress, or on her or his person while covered with a *shawl*, and the other member has to find it out. The bride has to stand and to go round her husband to feel the nut in every possible place while the husband sits. If it cannot be found, she has to fold her hands and to beg of her husband to yield it. Next the betel-leaves are rolled into cigarettes with elongated pieces of cocoa-kernel, or cloves and the bride is asked to hold it in her lips. The husband has to pick it up with his lips—an action which necessitates the raising of her head, which out of modesty is always held down. This effort, counteracted by the modesty of the girl, produces immense mirth among the youngsters on both sides, intermixed as it is with pretty little jokes. "Oh! she does not raise her head; she does not like him," hits a girl on the bridegroom" side. "Oh! she is not immodest like you *Sudhārak* (reformer,) allowing your husband to kiss you in public," retorts a maid on the bride's side. Others echo "Sudhārak! Sudhārak!" "Now you better beg of her a kiss," pinches a companion. "Why, it is his right," replies another. At last the head is raised and the roll of the betel-leaf is picked up, but a hurrah is followed by accusation that the husband kissed his little girl-wife while picking up the roll! Such an accusation involving grave breach of etiquette in kissing a wife in public is stoutly denied by the bridegroom's party; evidence is never wanting. "Yes," says out of fun, a grave gray-head among the spectators' relations, "I thought he was too close to the lips of the dear little girl. Have you examined them; see if he

has not bit them!" Shouts of laughter greet this leading question. Then it is the turn of the bride to pick up the roll out of the lips of her husband. She has to stand while he remains squatting reclined against a cushion. She is closely watched and protected out of modesty. She dare not undertake so hazardous a task! "Do her eyes meet that of her husband? Does he smile? Does he pull the roll into his mouth to shorten the distance between the lips? Does he hold it fast or let it go the moment she picks it up with her lips? Does he cut it off with his teeth and retain portion out of fun?" The proper thing to do is to hold it with the lips and to pull it out so as to divide it in the struggle as the husband is supposed to hold it fast. The slightest variation is misrepresented out of fun, and is calculated as evidence of likes or dislikes of the newly-married pair. In the midst of these jokes the arrival of the carriages and palanquins is announced, and the party goes to the house of the bride to repeat the same games, to be followed by a bath preceded by copious sprinkling and syringing of saffron-water over the bridegroom and the maids and companions. In the pot containing the saffron-water, a ring is dropped by the brother of the bride and is struggled for by the newly-married pair, but the bride generally yields the ring to her husband while her hand is under the solution, or even if she does not, she is accused of having given it to him out of love. "Yes, you found it first and handed it over to him" is the usual term of accusation. She shakes her head. Another girl supports her and says, "No, I found it and gave it to her, but her husband forced it out of her fist," Shouts a third one. "What *jabardasti!*" says a fourth. At the end of the ceremony the ring becomes the property of the husband. They bathe amidst anointings, syringings, and throwing sprays of water out of the mouth. To wipe his body the bridegroom gets a gold-bordered Benares scarf, worth Rs. 25 or so, as a towel.

The sacred fire at the altar, *Vedi*, is worshipped and the breakfast repeated. While the youngsters are thus enjoying

themselves, ever since the early morn, the elders in the bride's house have been toiling, in arranging for the grand feast to the whole caste and the whole circle of Brahman and other twice-born friends—who can sit in the same *pangat* or row. On the evening of the marriage day, a party—consisting of an important member of the bride's family, a lady, and a few companions—is despatched to issue verbal invitations to all the guests selected. Sometimes two, three or even half a dozen parties are despatched to the different wards of the town to accelerate work. The gentleman invites the males with their wives, children, guests, and servants, as the formula "*Pahi pāhunyāsuddha saha kutumb, saha parivār* (*lit.* with guests, unexpected arrivals, family including cognates, children, and servants.)" In the small hours of the morning the kitchen is lighted, the cooks are busy and the store-keeper (*Kothāvle*) is worried for everything including worthless corriander seed to costly crocus (saffron). Early in the morning parties of middle-aged men are despatched to remind all guests that the time for taking their baths is up, and to announce the hour of the dinner. These rounds are repeated a number of times, until all the invited guests have arrived, except those from the house of the bridegroom's father. To invite them the host has to go himself with musicians, conveyances, and a party of friends and relations. A *hazri*-roll is taken to see that none remains unnoticed, all are gathered together and the procession starts back. On arrival they are led courteously to their seats near the cushion placed in the centre of the back wall of the hall, where the bridegroom is possibly seated playing at chess or cards with his companions, after finishing his breakfast. He stands, all stand, he makes room for his father and other elders, all move aside, he throws a glance round the company, beckons to a nearer or more respectable place anybody that may have escaped notice, and as soon as his father is seated at one end of the cylindrical cushion, he takes his seat at the other end, at the request of his father-in-law, while he is showing respect to his uncles by trying to go to a lower seat. His father and

uncle concede to him that honoured seat. All sit down as if in a *Darbār*. Warm water is placed in a large *gangālayas* (water-pots of a peculiar shape) with *lotas* in each and attendants are posted with towels on their shoulders. The guests are requested to wash their feet and hands. They do so and change their clothes, all wearing silk *pitāmbars*. They are led to the dinner hall. Each is courteously shown his seat commensurate with his dignity based on relationship with the bridegroom or official and social position. The *Vādhapes* or "table attendants" have by this time kept the dishes full of dainties arranged in order like an object lesson—a *menu;* the clerks—assisted by some members of the family, have drawn the stencil designs round them and the boys have placed the incense-stick-holders (*agar-batti-chi-ghare*) in-between the plates. As soon as the guests are seated the mother-in-law of the hero steps forward and repeats the *ghi-āchamanyam* or sipping thrice over, the host takes stock of the guests once more to see that no one is neglected, and that every one has got a suitable seat; and shouts "*Har, Har, Mahādev!*" This cry is taken up by men standing at the entrances of the different quadrangles, halls, bowers, etc., and "*Har, Har, Mahādev*!" (*lit.* glory to the great Lord) resounds through the whole building including the bowers. The dinner begins, but the father and the uncle of the boy do not partake of the feast. They act the host along with the father of the bride and watch every plate to see that dainties are served *agrahpurvak, i.e.*, with solicitations. Here an Indian feast materially differs from a European feast, where the host and hostess take food and never press anybody to accept any stuff he does not like. Everybody selects his own plate and takes just the quantity he wants. But in India the host has to go about from plate to plate, and guest to guest, with the table-servant nearest him or with sweet balls in his own hand to press or solicit a guest to accept it. It is not considered good manners to ask for anything or point out to the *menu*. The host must offer it, the guest must say, "No, no, thank you,"

and yet the host must force it on him. Then the guest eats it if he likes, if not, he leaves it. There is thus a great deal of waste which goes to the low-class untouchables of the town. While the feast is in full swing, there are volleys of poetic effusions recited by the boys; some in congratulation, some in praise of the Gods, some in appreciation of the grand feast, and some at random. At the end of each stanza the reciter has to shout "*Sitā-kānt-smarana!*" praise unto Sita's Lord; the whole company reciprocates "*Jaya Jaya Rām,*" success unto Rām (the King of Oudh), or "*Namah pārvati pateh!*" bow unto the husband of Pārvati, which forces out another shout—"*Har, Har, Mahādev!*" Each reciter has his favourite deity, he selects it and shouts according to his choice. If a boy falters or fails or forgets the line, his compatriots shout "*Pundalik-varde,*" and "*Hari Vithal*" resounds through the company followed by a laugh from youngsters and a smile from the elders. Some one there prompts him, and if he can gather courage enough, he repeats, ending with an exultant call for the name of Rām. If not, he becomes the laughing-stock of the other boys. But when the turn of the bridegroom to sing a song comes, all is silent. Even a pin dropped into the hall would be heard by all. Wrapped in attention everyone that can see him seated on the raised platform, the *Vedi*, with his wife by his side, has his eyes turned towards him. That is a trying moment. His *vivâ voce* examination at the University-hall was not so critical. His selection of the verse, his voice, his accents, his tune, his delivery, all undergo careful scrutiny. But if he hesitates some one shouts "Oh! he has left his note book at home." "Oh! his professor comes from Rome." "Then let him go on with *Mensa, Mensi, Mense*" and some such arrows are aimed at him until he yields by reciting or succumbs by refusing to expose himself. Then some one else—possibly an expert—stands by him as a champion or the bride-groom's best man, and gives a vocal treat which stops all slander for, it is a 'party' question. Youngsters on either side challenge those on the opposite side to recite the verses them-

selves containing such a call. The usual rebuke may be recorded thus :—

Gānār mandalino, tāl surāvar Mhanā tumhi āryā ; Kāmukha Khāli karitān, pati-sanmukha lājate jashi bhārga—

i.e., "Oh singers ! do recite your verses in proper tune ; why do you hang down your heads like a new bride in the presence of her husband ?" After the feast, when everyone has washed his hands, dressed himself and resumed his seat in the reception hall, *pān*, *atār*, and rosewater, complete the banquet, and everyone goes home except the bridegroom and his selected friends. But another feast for the ladies is in rapid progress, the plates are removed, the floor-decoration is repeated, the stools are washed, wiped, and replaced, and the mother of the bride has started with tom-tom and conveyances to bring the mother of the bridegroom, and the whole process is repeated with the variation that the bride sits again in the *pangat* (row) to share the plate of her mother-in-law in the place of that of her husband as was the case in the first banquet. The bridegroom takes no part. All males leave the halls and the ladies are allowed to take their food undisturbed. That over, a third *pangat* for the servants followed by distribution of food among those servants whose relations could not come, ends the business of the second day of the marriage.

On the third day the games of the married couple and the bath are repeated in the house of the father of the bridegroom, followed by a feast. On the fourth day early in the morning there is bustle in the house of the bride and a display of silver pots consisting of a *lota* worth ₹100 or so for water, a *tasta*, washing-basin to wash the face, a silver-framed mirror, a box for the red powder, another for the bee's wax, and a number of cups with toilette requisites for the mother of the bridegroom are got together with dresses and things arranged in trays. They are handed over to the maidservants and a party starts with a band to offer *tondadhune* (*lit.* materials for

washing the face). The whole set costs about Rs. 500. The bridegroom's mother is respectfully asked to wash her mouth.

The bride's mother has to wash the feet of the bridegroom and to wipe them off with the folds of her own *sāri*, but as the latter is a valuable stuff she merely touches them with it and then uses a towel. The bridegroom's mother who is seated on a raised stool is then offered in a silver saucer some sugar for use as a tooth powder, some silver clove-shaped tooth-picks, and milk for a gargle. In fact she is treated with the greatest possible respect, so much so that even her cows are not forgotten. They are on this occasion supplied with stumps of succulent vegetables, etc., made up into a composition of fodder which is ceremoniously offered as *ambavan* (cow's food) on this occasion. This done, the bride's mother has to formally comb the hair of the bridegroom's mother, to apply the red powder to her forehead, the turmeric-powder cosmetic to her cheeks and arms, to put the silver toe-rings in her toes, and to crown the ceremony by putting a gold crysanthemum or rose flower into her braids. She then stands before her and with folded hands solicits the favour of her and her lady friends' company to her house for an elaborate bath called *rās-nāhān* and then to stay for dinner. The latter goes there in the grandest style, with sheets of white cloth spread on the road, umbrellas, *ab lāgirs* sunshades held over her, and music playing. Red powder (*gulāl*) is thrown over the ladies from basketsful carried by servants, and the white sheets spread on the public road are being folded and unfolded over and over again to remove obstruction in the public streets and to supply soft material for the ladies to walk on, as they wear no shoes and take no conveyance on this occasion. At every turning or every house of acquaintance messengers are dispatched to invite resident ladies to join the procession which swells to an enormous extent —all ladies enjoying the freedom and the display in public.

The *Rās-nāhān*, means ladies' joint bath. On arrival at the bride's house the bridegroom's mother is courteously offered a seat in an inner quadrangle. All the ladies accom-

panying her (who are necessarily married ones) or unmarried girls are requested to take their seats. Female bangle-sellers are then posted in two to six places with a stool in front of their baskets or trays holding large displays of glass bangles from Europe. Beginning with girls and ladies who have to return home early, they are made to sit on the stools and to select the prettiest set. The Kāsārin (lit. bangle-seller) then puts them on and a girl notes down the number and price. The lady so honoured, is then carried to the *chauk* or quadrangle where a number of maidservants are kept ready to fetch warm water, to apply cosmetics to her body, perfumed oil to her hair, and to bathe her, while music is played in the bower outside the house. This is repeated in the case of every lady-guest, while carriages, conveyances, and messengers are being despatched in all directions for escorting ladies who have not been able to accompany the party when it started from the bridegroom's house. When every lady for whom the mothers of the bride and bridegroom have any consideration has thus been bathed and honoured with the *pān* and *oti* they either return home or are asked to stay according to convenience. Then follows the banquet in honour of the father and the mother of the bridegroom. The father's *pangat* (row) has nothing special except that only a few select covers are laid, and special dainties for which he may have a partiality are supplied. But the mother-in-law's *pangat* or row which follows generally at night is an elaborate business. Light of sorts and decorations of sorts are in evidence. In former days a special row of lamps made of cow-dung were placed round the plate of the guest of the evening but of late excellent fairy lights have taken their place and the gentlemen take a delight in witnessing from galleries, doors, and windows, the beautiful illuminations of the hall. The bride is asked to share or has been granted the honour to share the plate of her mother-in-law. Little verses and pretty songs are sung by the young girls of both the houses and the dinner made as enjoyable as possible. Among the Brahmans taunts and even insults under the cloak of crude verses are aimed at

the girls of the opposite party, but the Prabhus object to the practice and have, instead, very pleasant and eulogistic sonnets sung. Strict instructions are given to the Brahman girls who take part in the banquet not to indulge in their objectionable practice, and they are closely watched on all sides by elders to prevent any unconscious and sometimes mischievous inclinations to indulge in objectionable language prompted by some slight she may have received in the course of the ceremony. Daughters of priests are considered vindictive and loquacious. They therefore require a check. If in spite of these precautions a Brahman's daughter begins an objectionable sonnet she is stopped and an elderly lady of the bride's party apologizes at once for the breach of etiquette in a *bhadra* (respectable) society. After the dinner, the mother of the bridegroom is taken to her house with suitable music and in a conveyance. She does not now walk home as she did in the morning to enjoy her walk on the white sheets spread on the roads. On the fourth day, the father of the bride is invited to dinner but in many cases he merely remains present at the banquet given in his name and for him—as its very name indicates (*Vyāhi-bhojan*) without taking a morsel. This is due to the injunctions that no father shall take his food in the house of his daughter until she presents her husband with a son. So strong is the belief, so strong the desire for a son, so imperative the unwritten commandment, that it possibly affects the birth of male children—who are always in excess in the Hindu community as recorded by the census.

Last of all, there is a dinner given to all servants and dependents.

While these dinners and banquets are going on preparations are being made for the *Sūn-mūkh* (lit. seeing the face of the daughter-in-law). The ladies of the bridegroom's side start at night with all the jewellery and a set of clothes intended for the bride. The goldsmith accompanies the procession with his pincers to fit in the heavy silver chains *todhe*, round the ankles, and the gold chains, etc., round the wrists. The bride is

asked to sit on the *Vedi* and there, the whole process of toilet is gone through. The goldsmith is given a turban and he goes away. But the ladies take long to finish the decorating and dressing of the bride. A little of the *Sindhur* is lastly put in the place where the hair is parted and *Surma* or antimony is applied to her eye-lids. The bridegroom is asked to pass the silver comb and the silver hair-pin over her hair and over her *bhāng* or partition-mark. He has to put the nose-ring on but he merely touches it and hands it over to his bride. She is now taken in her lap by her mother-in-law and after carefully looking into her face, a piece of sugar-candy is placed in her mouth. *Airani-dān* or *Jhāl* is the next ceremony. It takes place on the night of the fourth day of the marriage immediately after *Sun-mūkh.* A large tray-like basket made of bamboo which is called *Vanshapātra* in Sanskrit is taken. *Vanshapātra,* is a name with double meaning. It means a receptacle used in a ceremony intended for the increase of *vansha* (progeny) and also 'a bamboo-basket.' In the centre of this *vanshapātra*—progeny-giving receptacle—is placed a leaf-plate containing cooked rice and all dainties. Five entire betelnuts, five wheat cakes—containing a sweetened gram composition (*puran*) as is done in omletts or patties, five *pāpads* or *urid cakes* (*Phaseolus mango*), five *pāpadis* or similar fragile rice cakes ; vermicelli must be added to the dinner plate. Along its circumference sixteen dimunitive horse-shoe-shaped winnowing-baskets are also added with little boxes for the red and yellow powders, green bangles, turmeric tubers, etc., represent the *Vāyanas* to be distributed at the end of the ceremony. Thus equipped, the Airani or *vanshapātra* is brought to the marriage-bower where guests have assembled in large number at the invitation of the bride-groom's father. The bride's parents, who have observed fast on that day, are ready in their silk or sacred dresses. The father is asked to step forward to take his seat facing east, his wife sits also facing east to his right. They worship Ganesh and *Varun* and then the lamps in the tray. The father then

says in Sanskrit that "I offer worship to the parents and elders of the bridegroom in order to obtain the religious merit of a *kanyādan* (gift of a daughter)."

DRESSES.—Now begins the most elaborate and the expensive job of distributing turbans and scarves to all the relations, friends, dependents, and servants of the bridegroom's family. The dresses have all been arranged by this time in a separate room, with slips containing the names of the recipients. The list is read by a junior member of the bride's family, and the gentleman recipient is pointed out in his place by a junior of the bridegroom's family. The father of the bride is given in his hand the proper dress; he has to go where the guest is seated and to offer it to him. He takes it and returns a bow. The officiating priests and astrologers are not forgotten. When the turn of the servants comes it is customary for the bride's father to stand in one place and the former to approach him with a bow, to receive the present and then to retire after bowing both to the bride's and the bridegroom's father who also stands near him. At last, all the guests are seated again and the parents of the bride begin another worship of the lamps in the bamboo tray. Eleven *mantras* have to be repeated on this occasion, all tending to a prayer to goddess Umā and her husband Maheshwar—the symbols of progenition and of love, represented by the betelnuts on the tray. Thus sanctified by the presence of Umā and Maheshwar enthroned in the tray, it is offered religiously to the mother of the bridegroom with a gold coin as *dakshina* and dress. Then Sanskrit verses in praise of the increase of progeny as prolific as the growth of the bamboo (*Vansho-vanshkarshrestho*). The bamboo or *vansh*-tray which signifies belief in sympathetic magic of like producing like is then lifted up and placed on the heads of the elderly ladies and gentlemen, and the bride is asked to sit under it near each of them.

A *mantra* is repeated. It means "I have brought up this child for the last eight years with fondness due to a son and now she is given into your family, pray protect her with kindness

and affection." It is a touching scene, as the last appearance of a daughter in public as a daughter before her *Gotra* is changed, in the ceremony called *Grihapravesh* (to follow in the due course). So often is this request repeated and so often has the bride to sit under it along with every man or woman who claims seniority by relation with her husband that the children who take part in the process go to sleep all over the place, affording opportunities to pilferers among the servants moving to guard or look after them. The young men and women of both the sides have an anxious hour looking after the little ones lying on the carpets bedecked with jewellery but overtaken by sleep.

After this *airani-dān*, the bride is taken to the family-gods where on the walls a drawing is kept ready. There she distributes the sixteen *vāyanās* or horse-shoe-shaped baskets, each containing toilette requisites and a bodice-piece to married women. The drawing contains a mango-tree with a creeper going round it and with its branches full of fruits and inflorescence. It has on either side eight married women holding lamps. These sixteen* *mātrikās* are supposed thus to have received the baskets just distributed. Water mixed with the red *Kunkum* powder is handed over to the bride in a silver cup. She touches her husband's right thigh with her left leg, places her left hand on his turban as he is seated, and she is standing. Then with the leaf of the betel-creeper, she sprinkles the mango-tree on the wall with the red powder solution. If the son-in-law has not already removed the silver image of Annapurna (the Goddess of Plenty) on the second day of the marriage he takes it now. This mango-tree-and-betel-creeper business signifies the position of the pair as a married couple (*vide supra*). At last the auspicious hour of the *Vadhu-pravesh* (*lit.* bride's entry) comes, and the presiding astrologer steps in to accelerate matters. All bustle, all *golmāl*, everybody gets up, puts

* *Mātrikās.* The sixteen *mātrikās* or divine mothers are (1) Gauri, (2) Padmā, (3) Shachi, (4) Medhā, (5) Sāvitri, (6) Vijayā, (7) Devasena, (8) Swadha, (9) Swāhā, (10) Mātaro, (11) Lokamatārh, (12) Shānti, (13) Pushshti, (14) Dhriti, (15) Tushti, (16) Kālavehatma Devatah all in one.

on caps and turbans on the heads of sleepy children rudely shaken, for, nobody must be seen with a bare head. Every male must have a head-dress of some sort or other and even the begging Dravid or Madras Brahman who goes bare-headed round the city is compelled to put on a cap or to tie a *dhoti* round his head. This unusual head-gear often adds a ludicrous look, producing mirth among the youngsters who take delight in suggesting (of course wrongly) how to put on a cap with the front arch-like opening backwards or to fold his *dhoti* slanting on the wrong side of the head! The fact remains, that every male must wear a head-dress. The procession the grandest of the kind accompanied by bands of musicians, groups of dancing-girls, knots of performing Bhānds, elephants, camels, horses, palanquins, *abdāgirs*, state-umbrellas and what-not, starts in the midst of a volley of guns and fire-works of the choicest kind. Pyrotechnics form the most prominent feature of this procession. The bride and the bride-groom are seated in a silver *Howdah* on the back of the quietest elephant selected as any mishap is counted as a bad omen. All along the road lights and buntings are seen and stations for the display of fireworks of sorts are posted. Torches fume and stink and therefore they are (in these days) replaced by portable Kitsen lights with fancy shades and used as torches. Candles with mica shades are added in profusion shaped like trees with the jets representing flowers. The bride-groom's father being the host of the ceremony, puts all his resources into requisition to make as grand a display as possible. As soon as the procession is formed in front of the bride's father's house, a cocoanut is waved round the faces of the pair and broken to feed evil spirits in theory, but the street boys in practice. Slowly and majestically does it move and go round the city by the longest route to the house of the bridegroom so as to reach the gate at the auspicious moment of the first appearance of *Aruna*, the charioteer of the Sun. This time is called *pancha-pancha ushahkāl*, or Gargāchārya's *muhurta* after the Rishi of that name, who with his divine astrolo-

gical powers fixed it as the most auspicious moment imaginable. The procession is called *Varāt* from *avartan* to return, as the bridegroom returns home with his prize.

As soon as the *Varāt*-procession reaches the house of the bridegroom the usual evil-eye evaders are repeated and he enters the bower, and through it the house with his wife. This is called *Vadhupravesh* (the entrance of the bride in her husband's house). At the threshold a saucerful of saffron is placed, and white floor-cloth is spread leading to the room occupied by the family godlings, a measure-full of grain to overflowing, is placed near it, and a sister of the bridegroom stands at the door to stop him from entering the house. Then the following dialogue takes place.

Brother.—"Whose picquet is this?"

The sister has to reply in a couplet containing her husband's name.

Brother.—"Why is it pitched here?"

Sister.—"Demands a daughter born of this pair."

Bridegroom (to the bride). "My sister demands a daughter. May we offer one?"

Bride.—"Pray tell her that we shall do so if a daughter be born at all."

Brother (to his sister).—"If a daughter be ever born unto us, we shall offer her to your son to wife.

The sister smiles consent and helps the bride to dip her feet in the saffron-solution and in upsetting the corn-measure with a push from her right foot. This is a symbolical proof of the entrance of the Goddess of Plenty (Annapurna) in the form of the bride, whose first footsteps bring corn to overflowing. The saffron-solution is intended to indicate on the white floor cloth, the golden-footprints of the goddess whom the bride is supposed to represent. Belief in "like-producing-like" is at the root of this practice. In the Harvest festival of the Gauri, footprints are similarly produced and the request "come with golden feet to stay" is added. Annapurna (*lit.* the plentiful supplier of food) is but another name of Gauri. Entering the

house thus, the newly-married pair has to bow unto the family gods and the parents and elders of the bridegroom. They are then made to sit in front of the Mahālaxmi (the great Goddess of Wealth) to perform her *puja*. After the worship the prayer "for the acquisition of unacquired wealth and the protection of wealth already begotten" runs in Sanskrit thus; *aprāpta Lakshmi prāptyartham, prāpta Lakshimi samraksharnārtham*, etc. After the *puja* and prayer, the bride is asked to feel the rice-heaps already arranged in front of the goddess, and she finds an ornament! Her mother-in-law asks "What have you found?" The bride replies "A jewelled necklace." "This is possibly the unacquired wealth" just referred to in the prayer. The prayer is thus practically granted on the spot! A little milk, mixed with sugar is offered in a silver cup to the bridegroom by his mother. When he drinks it, she asks "Are you satisfied, dear child"? He replies "Yes, I am, and have brought Goddess Lakshmi with me (pointing to his wife)." Milk-and-sugar drink is then offered in the same cup by her (the mother-in-law) to the bride. When she takes it she is asked "Are you satisfied, child." The bride replies "Yes, I have come home with golden feet." (Here the use of the saffron-solution is accounted for.)

CHUL-BHĀNUS literally means kitchen, fireplace. In this ceremony the mother-in-law conducts the daughter-in-law to the kitchen room and shows her the fireplace, the milk-churning place or dairy. This looks like initiation into her duty as a housewife. It may be noted here that the first entry of the newly-married pair takes place at an auspicious moment previously fixed, and hence the selection of the same moment for the initiation. The bride is offered a *sāri* which she wears for the first time with one end passed round her shoulders from left to right and a fold tucked up behind. This was not done in the unmarried state when girls were to be married at eight, but of late they are allowed to grow to a maturer age before they are married. They cover therefore the whole of the body long before this ceremony and yet the ceremony remains intact.

Its superfluity is no consideration in favour of its removal from the programme and its existence is impressively shown by not allowing the girl to wear the *padar* or outer end round her shoulders at the marriage—on the lotus-symbol on the first day. Thus dressed the bride returns to where her husband remains sitting in front of the Mahālaxmi and takes her seat near him. They both worship the goddess. A silver plate filled with coloured rice so as to form a layer is placed before the bridegroom and he, with a golden stylo, writes the new name selected for his bride who thenceforward bears it along with her husband's *gotra* dropping her maiden name and *gotra*, she is thus transferred finally to her husband's family. It is from this moment—this transfer—that she becomes Mrs. so-and-so instead of Miss so-and-so. The husband and wife then return to the *mandap* or bower where all assembled guests have remained waiting listening to the songs and witnessing the performances of the dancing girls. A dress is offered to the father of the bride, but he merely touches and returns it as he is not by custom allowed to accept anything from his daughter's house until she gets a son. Sugar is now placed in a silver tray with a small cup filled in. The bride and bridegroom stand in front of the honoured guest of the house—the father of the bride. He is offered a cupful, he points to the gentleman—elders of his own side. It is offered to him by the bride to whom it is handed over by the bridegroom duly filled, up to overflowing. He generally demands the name of her husband. It has to be mentioned in a couplet like the following :—

(i) *Malānalagè hirā, malā nalage moti ;*

(ii) So-and-so *ratna gavasle mājhyā hāti.*

i.e. "I care not for diamonds, I care not for pearls, as I have got in my hand the jewel of jewels, so-and-so." She is of course (being the wife of a rich young man) dazzling with jewels and this is a modest response to the joke the guest aims at her by saying "Whose is this lady decked in jewels that offers me this sugar ?" The couplet varies according to circum-

stances and the ready wit of the girl. The distribution of sugar takes a long time as very often the companions and bridesmaids all demand from her her husband's name, and from him his wife's name, as often as they choose, but the elders are served first. The great pride of the youngsters is to feign deafness in order to compel the pair to repeat their names often and anon amidst applauses, hurrahs, and laughters at each couplet the girl aims at each questioner according his rank, age, and position. Her education, her wit, her patience are all tried in a pleasant way, some guest sufficiently familiar suggests a funny couplet like this :—

Dāri hote konāde, tyāant hote kārle ;
So-and-so *ne dhadā nāhi kelā sabab pantojine mārle !*

i.e. "On the verandah, there was a niche which contained a fruit of *Kārle ;* so-and-so did not prepare his lessons and therefore his teacher caned him (*mārle*)" Hurrah ! cry his equals. "Yes, I saw it" asserts one ; "I too was there" adds another ; "and so was I," vouchsafes a third. Applause after applause follows. The bridegroom smiles but the bride also smiles with her head bent down and is possibly compiling a rejoinder, which may run :—

"On the play-grounds there is all noise and hop-hop ;
But at the examinations so-and-so is always at the top."

Applause from the bride's side ! This continues for some time and all disperse, amid distribution of *pān, tar, gulāb,* flowers and cocoanuts. Then the pair go to the ladies' hall and the sugar-distribution ceremony is repeated. The mother of the bride being the chief guest of the zanana, is now most courteously asked to accept the sugar but she is generally in tears as the whole ceremony indicates the detachment of her child from her family and *gotra.* All elderly ladies gather round her, console her, treat her with the greatest kindness and consi-

deration and refer her to the bright future in store for her child. At last she prepares to return home leaving her dear one behind. She is requested to stay a while and offered a *païthani* or silk and gold brocade cloth worth Rs. 200 or so with a bodice-piece worth Rs. 15 or so. All the lady-members of her family are similarly honoured with a new dress according to rank and relationship. This dressing the mother is called "*pōt-jhākne*, or uterine-covering. After the company is dressed and the flowers, *pān*, cocoanut, etc., are distributed among them, the mother of the bride stands again to take her leave. She most affectionately passes her hand round the face of her child, holds her hand, gives it over to her mother-in-law, and says "Pray do protect my dear child. She has been placed in your lap. I have no right (Oh God!) to her now. She is entirely yours. Teach her, train her, excuse her for any blunders. I spread the end of my *sāri* in humble solicitation. Do grant me the boon." The mother-in-law of the girl assures her, consoles her. She now addresses her daughter thus: "My dear child, this is your mother-in-law, your mother. Obey her, never disobey her, be obedient, may I take my leave now?" She nods her head with floods of tears in her eyes. They start, the mother and her female relations. They are followed by the mother-in-law and her lady relations to see her off. As they leave, the father of the girl rises to go and addresses the father-in-law: "Sir, do protect my child, she is placed in your lap." The parents and their friends start, the father and mother-in-law accompany them to the first turning and return home. The procession proceeds in the midst of music and illuminations, but it has, a dismal appearance. With the bride, the bridesmaid or associate and a female servant stay behind in her new home to keep company. The *chaturthānhik* including the worship of the sacred fire in the new home, the removal of the *kankana* or yellow-thread-amulet of the worshippers of the wife are the next ceremonies. For this purpose it is necessary to take the married couple to the house of the bride's father where the *Vedi* stands and the

fire is kept. This is the final worship and its transfer to the house of the bridegroom. The bride sits near her husband and touches his hand while he is performing the *Vedic* ceremony, that is she participates in it as *ardhāngi* literally (*half*) though not called 'better' half. Translations of some of the *Vedic* mantras will be found interesting:—

(1) May *Brahma* help us to procreate children. May Āryamā and the Sun grant us long life. Oh wife! do not be sorry, come to my house, become the queen of my home, offer hospitality to my friends, and do give kind treatment to my servants, and feed and make happy all my pets (animals).

(2) Oh wife! Be considerate, be just, see that you live happily without pain. This will give happiness in return. Take care of my domestic animals, feed them timely; control your mind. You will then endear yourself to my people, and acquire a good reputation. May God grant you glorious sons. Be willing to perform *yadnyas yogās*, etc. (*Vedic* ceremonies.)

(3) Oh Indra! Pray grant good sons to this bride; do grant her wealth, let her beget ten sons from me then we [ten sons and myself] the eleventh, will form a large family.

(4) Oh wife! Serve your father-in-law obediently and be his favourite daughter-in-law, and thereby acquire respectable position in the family. Keep your brothers-and-sisters-in-law pleased, and be their great favourite."

These are the prayers repeated while *ghi* and other combustibles are offered to the sacred fire. At last a little of the remnant *ghi* is taken at the tip of the finger and applied to his own and his wife's region of the heart with the *mantras*. "May all gods remove all our anxieties and grant us power to acquire merit, reputation, and the desire to perform our *Vedic* rites. May all the water gods and goddesses lead our minds to

virtue, may *Vāyu* (the God of the Wind) excite love for each other in our hearts. May Brahma unite our hearts, and may the Goddess of Learning Saraswati grant us the desire to live amicably (in love)."

The bridegroom then washes his hands. The *Yadna-Kakanās* are removed by the priest and the pair is blessed by priests and the married ladies. The Brahmans are given cash (*dakshina*).

Devakoththāpan.—The dispersal of the gods-enthroned at the beginning. It is done with equal gravity as on the first occasion. The symbols placed in the winnowing basket tied up in mango-leaves are taken out worshipped with due ceremony. All the gods are requested to return home. The Brahman adds "Be calm, be pleased, do come again." The married man places them over the head and requests them every season for good ceremonies in his house. The Brahmans say Amen (tathāstu). This is a signal for the removal of the marriage-bower, as the first pillar ceremoniously put in is now removed.

Varāt Bhojan.—Another banquet and another ending with a Gondhal.

GONDHAL.—The *Gondhal* is a dance performed in honour of Bhavāni—the goddess of the warrior race. The men who perform the ceremony are called Gondhalis and correspond to the bards of the North. In the centre of a group of these men is placed a torch burning. Near it the image of Bhavāni on a heap of rice. A double drum called *samhel*, a one-wire fiddle called *t natune*, and a pair of symbols called *jhānj*, are the only musical instruments used by the group. The Chief-man stands in front of the goddess and prays her to honour the *mandap* with her presence in half verse, half prose, half supplication and half importunities. Assuming that she has arrived he adds a suitable welcome in verse. He then begins to sing and dance in praise of her achievements and finally, adds the heroic ballads known as *povādās* in praise of the celebrated warriors, heroes, kings, ministers, diplomats of the Marathas (*vide* Collection translated and published by Mr. Acworth, C. S.,

of Bombay). Until the early hours of the morning these *povādās* are sung and the dance continued. At last the goddess is asked to return "to come back again repeatedly on similar auspicious occasions and the bards are paid in cash and kind (dresses or food).

DEVADARSHANA.—This is the last or the winding up ceremony in which the newly-married husband and the wife have to go to the city god's temple with the ends of their dresses tied together and on return, they are again bathed ceremoniously to take off the "*halad*" or turmeric cosmetics. The *Vedi* is protected by a hedge and a fruit-bearing creeper is planted on it as an auspicious "prognosticator."

On the eighth day of the marriage the new son-in-law is invited for a bath followed by a banquet and is given a new dress consisting of a turban worth Rs. 25 and gold-embroidered silk coat worth Rs. 75 or so. Modern ways of sealing the new relationship and friends are brought in requisition in organizing excursions to interesting places in the vicinity, and photographs in groups of the (1) bride and bridegroom, (2) the bride and her maids, (3) the bridegroom and his companions, (4) the new brothers-in-law and (5) the little boys and girls who have come for the marriage with their parents. Dresses to all the guests on their departure home amid thanks, blessings and requests to come again for the next marriage goes on for a few days. The father of the bride returns home with the daughter and family. She is kept in their house until she comes to age and allowed to visit her new home on holidays as the Ganesh, Gauri, and Dadara days.

FINIS.

APPENDIX.

Some curiosities of Indian Marriage Customs.

The Bride.—The bride is always a virgin among Brahmans, Prabhus, and Vaishaya or Banias of the twice-born type. As a rule they are married before they come to age, but the Kapol Banias allow girls to come to age before marriage. Among the Kedava Kunbis or Pātidārs, if no bridegroom can be secured on the 12th year, girls are married to a bunch of flowers. The bunch is thrown into a well and thus the girl is made a widow—free to marry at any time. Among them all marriages must be performed once in 12 years and on one day. Girls are generally selected from the houses in which one's own girls are married. This indirect exchange is called *Sasha-kosta.* Among the Kolhātis or Dombāris a woman, when she comes to age, is asked to choose between married life or prostitution. Among the Jain Banias of Gujerat the bride has her hair tied into a knot (while all other castes leave the hair loose) at the time of the marriage. With the Shrimāli Brāhamans, before the marriage, the bride rides to the house of her future husband and gets a *sāri* from her future father-in-law. The bride's father, if of good family, receives Rs. 101, as *palla*, Rs. 25 to 40 as *odhana* to the girl, and Rs. 12 for miscellaneous gifts. If he is not a *Kulin* he gets nothing. The bride sits worshipping or meditating on Ganesh while the bridegroom is being welcomed "outside."

Dower.—Nāgar Brahmans have to pay dowry to the bride. It is called *palla.* The bridegroom wears no coat or dress except a *dhoti* and a shawl, and he remains without any tailor-made dress for four days until the father-in-law provides him with one. Jain Banias of Gujerat also receive *palla,* or bride-price. Vajkhedaval-Brahmans of Kathiawar as well receive bride-price. Among Modha Brahmans the bride's father gets Rs. 200 to Rs. 500 and the girl gets a cloth worth Rs. 100, one ornament, Rs. 5 to 50 in cash as the "*Vasant*" ceremony. Among Maishr Vaishyas Rs. 3 (three) are paid as *chāndala* to the bride's father, possibly a remnant of the old custom of taking bride-price. Among Bhils bride-price is Rs. 70. Among Gujerāti Kumbhārs a bride price is accepted. The Gollas of Gujerat have to pay "bride-price." Among Gujerati Sutārs the bride-price or *palla* rises up to Rs. 400. The Vāghers a depressed class in Kathiawar possibly the aboriginal fighting race of the land, pay five *Koris* (about Rs. 1¼) to the father of the bride at the *Vāgdān* ceremony however rich he may be. This is perhaps the purchase money of yore. Sindh Mohamedans take bride-price and settle the claim of the bride on the gifts the bridegroom makes, such as ornaments etc.

The Bride's Prayer.—*Amba* literally means a mango. Among the Brahmans of Bombay a mango-tree is drawn or painted in green on a

wall facing the west. On one side is drawn the sun and on the other the moon, just above the tree. Under the tree is placed a slab of stone or a low wooden stool two or three inches high and one to two feet square. On each corner of this stool are arranged sets of five earthen-pots painted with red ochre and other pigments. Cotton thread is passed round this set several times over again. The floor on the three sides of the low stool or board is decorated with drawings in coloured powders. In the centre of the slab or stool are placed the images of Shiva and his consort Gauri. In front of them is placed the image of Shachi the wife of Indra the Vedic god. Below the stool and in front of it, is placed a lamp on a heap of clay. While the bridegroom is being welcomed by the males in the marriage-bower, the bride sits in front of this drawing and prays unto Indrāni, the constant wife of changeable husbands. The tradition is, that Indrāni is but one wife who has to serve as consort anyone who attains the position of Indra through his austerities or sacrifices. The Brahma nbride says "I pray unto thee Indrāni, the wife of the King of Gods, let my marriage ceremony pass successfully and may she grant me fortune, health and sons." Another feature of the symbolic drawing on the mango-tree consists of the bride watering the tree by placing her left foot on the right thigh of her husband and her left hand on his turban and sprinkling water on the tree with a betel leaf or a mango-leaf. Does it signify that woman is the creeper that grows round the tree (her husband) and supplies moisture for its growth by attracting clouds ? Among Prabhus Shachi the wife of many husbands is not worshipped, but the constant Gauri as Annapurna (the supplier of food, holding the laddle of plenty) is worshipped when the bridegroom is welcomed in the marriage-bower and the bride prays "Gauri Gauri, grant me home, by protecting the invited guest who is being welcomed (at the bower)."

Abduction.—In the midst of the marriage ceremony among the Shenvis while the bride is being covered on the upper portion of her body and while her *sāri* is being tucked up on the back side the bridegroom leaves the bower. In his short absence the bride is concealed. When her husband returns the father of the bride declares that he has lost his daughter! She has been abducted! He then requests, the son-in-law to trace her whereabouts, who proceeds to do so with a lamp in the hands of one of his companions and in that search-light pilfers small articles. When she is discovered, the bride returns to the bower with the bridegroom but both are stopped at the entrance by a sister of the latter, who claims a daughter of the newly-married pair for her son. She extorts a promise, the new pair returns to the bower to be blessed along with ten other married pairs with the ends of their scraves tied together seated only on plantain-leaves.

Among Bhils abduction or elopement is permitted if the husband is allowed to pay the bride-price Rs. 70 by instalments.

Bridegroom.—Among the Shenvis (Sāravsat Brahmans of Goa) on the third day of the marriage the bridegroom gets or manages to get cross while preparing to partake a feast, and leaves the house of his father-in-law to go to a temple, or to a friend's house. He is followed by the bride's brother, who coaxingly asks why he is cross and what he could do to please him. After a great deal of persuasion the bridegroom consents to the proposal of returning to the feast on condition that all his brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law come to invite him with tom-tom. The terms are accepted, and as they are already known by custom, the procession starts, with musicians and dancing girls. Then light refreshments are supplied to the party in the temple or the friend's house. The eldest brother of the bride takes his wife to his left, holds the left hand of the bridegroom with his right hand and the eldest sister of the bride takes her husband to her left and holds the bridegroom's right hand with her left one. Thus walking in the centre of the two pairs and accompanied by friends and relations, musicians and dancing girls the hero of the ceremony returns triumphant to his father-in-law to partake of the feast. Among Gujerāti Sonis (goldsmiths) the bridegroom turns back with a few companions and a torch-bearer while going for the marriage.

Polygamy.—Gollas of Gujerat can marry many girls simultaneously in the same bower and even two sisters together.

Bride's Brother.—The bride's brother among the Jains presses the toe of the bridegroom after the *homa* (fire-worship) the bridegroom ouches the *Kshetrapāla* stone with his toe.

Sister of the Bridegroom.—Among Jains the sister of the bridegroom prevents him from entering the house when he brings home the bride. She asks him if he would give his daughter in marriage to her son. He refers her to his bride who replies "I will offer you one of three pearls I may get." Among the Prabhus, when the bride is brought to her husband's house for the first time the sister of the bridegroom stands at the main entrance and stops the pair from entering the house. The brother asks "Whose picket is this," the sister mentions her husband's name in a grandiloquent style with a profusion of adjectives arranged in a couplet. He then asks why is it here ? and the sister answers "Demands a daughter." He then consults the bride, and she replies to her sister-in-law (after due deliberation !) in the affirmative. They are then allowed to enter. The want of marriageable girls due to tribal pride is possibly responsible for this mock picket and imperative demand of the sister of the bridegroom. Among Kunbis the sister of the bridegroom extorts a promise that he would give his daughter in marriage to her son. Among Maishri Banias the sister of the bridegroom shuts the door and does not open it until her brother, the bridegroom, pays her something. Among Sindh-Musalmāns the sister of the bride stands at the entrance of the room and is given a present.

Mother-in-law.—The mother-in-law pulls the nose of the bridegroom at the *Saptapadi* fire-worship, among Shri Gaud Brahmans, and carries him from the entrance of the house to the marriage-bower. Among Maishri Banias the mother-in-law welcomes the bridegroom by pulling his nose. Among goldsmiths in Gujerat the mother-in-law welcomes the bridegroom by holding a sieve containing flour-lamp, flour sausages, spindle, four blades of grass and a *mūsal*, rice-pounding staff. The grass blades are thrown in the four directions of the compass. The fire is kicked aside by the bridegroom and the bride's mother or sister pulls the nose of the bridegroom, he catches her *sāri* and takes a rupee, before it is released.

Symbols.—Among Bhātias, the women of the bride's house take an offering to the *Gotradevata* or ancestral godlings. It consists of some cooked food, milk, and curd, sprinkled over with the red powder and topped over with a small pinion. After placing the offering before the symbolic "tree-of-cognates" drawn on a wall, they place before it one maund of dates, one bag of sugar (about 2 maunds). The Bhātiyas of Kathiawar and Kutch draw a symbolic *gotra devāta*, or "tree-of-cognates," with five dots of cowdung, four filfot crosses (Swastiks) and 28 *tilaks* or dots in red turmeric arranged in a pyramid, beginning with one and ending serially with seven dots in a row, but the important part of the ceremony is the dried date-fruit tied to a nail fixed in the centre of the figure. The date is not an Indian product. It directs attention to the land where the "cognates" are or were. The Bhātias are believed to be the descendants of the Scythians, Arabian merchants, and pirates of prehistoric times.

Among the Sindh-Musalmāns, before he enters the room a pitcher is placed in front of the bridegroom and he is asked to break it with the weight on his leg. If he succeeds women sing him a song that he will turn out a brave man.

Sometimes a thorny bush is placed before him and he is asked to cut it into two with a sword.

Fire.—Among the Jain Banias the bridegroom kicks aside the fire with some salt kept covered in flat *chatties* tied together with red thread, near the entrance of the marriage-bower, possibly to remove the effects of the evil eye. The fire (*grih-agni*) prepared in the bride's quarters has to be taken to the bridegroom's house. Special importance is given to the Sun-worship and this fire is used for the *griha-praveshaniya homa* among Visābhārgav Brahmans.

Tree-Worship.—Jwāri seedlings grown for the purpose have to be worshipped by the newly-married couple and women to be fed in honour of the family goddess specially made of clay; the former (seedling-worship) is called the *mahāputom* ceremony, and is performed by Visābhārgav Brahmans. Gujerāti Sonis worship seedlings specially grown in baskets

and ceremoniously carry them to a tank or river after the marriage ceremony is over.

Totem.—Among the Marāthas proper, a member of the family of the bridegroom goes with musicians to the tree representing the *devak*, worships it, takes a small twig, puts it in a winnowing basket, brings it ceremoniously home, puts it in the room set aside for the family gods, adds betel-nuts to represent his ancestors, and worships the whole group.

Family Goddess.—The lay figure of the family goddess made of wheat flour is dressed in the Chief *Sāri* given to the bride by the father-in-law of the girl, and is adorned with the ornaments so given, and placed in front of the bridegroom in the dinner-hall. Women sing songs, offer her *ghi*, and make the bridegroom, his father, uncle, etc., drink it.

Omen.—Among the Gujerati Sonārs when the bridegroom passes the lamps brought for his welcome, some one from bride's side rubs his cheek with an old bodice of the bride without being detected in the act. If successful this act indicates the success of the bride over her husband.

Bride's Uncle.—The bride's maternal uncle brings her to the marriage-bower and his maternal uncle has to carry the bridegroom to the house of the bride among Shrigaud Brāhmans.

Barber.—Among the Marāthas proper, the *rukhvat* is carried by the barber, who also holds the horse on which the bridegroom rides to the house of the bride. Among them the presence of a barber is essential at the time of settling a marriage contract. He is possibly the man through whom matches were made in ancient days as he has admission into both the families. He is generally well informed as to the qualifications and financial position of the parties. The barber is in this ceremony called *mhala*, match-maker. Among the Shrigaud Brahmans a barber has to be sent to the bridegroom's house with turmeric and warm water and it is the barber who bathes him and is given the *dhoti* used by the bridegroom at the bath.

Dhobi.—A Dhobin, washerwoman, is required for worshipping the curry-stone among the Marāthas proper, but the Dhobin or *rajak* is considered an impure woman and her very sight is inauspicious among high-class Hindus. She is also asked to spread rice or wheat and place on them the low stool on which the bridegroom has to sit for the *Simānt-pujan*. Kunbis also requisition the services of a washerman to wash the curry-stone.

Dress.—A pith-crown is worn by the Lingāyets in marriage.

Chargers.—The fourth day procession requires a bull as a charger on which the bride and the bridegroom ride among Lingāyets. The bridegroom of the Mahārs, untouchables, rides on a bull when he goes to the bride's house for the marriage; so also among the *Māngs*.

Place of Marriage.—Among high class Jangams marriage is per-

formed in the house of the bridegroom and not in that of the bride as it is done in all other castes.

Mock Fight (*Games*).—Among Jains in Central India the bride and bridegroom beat each other with twisted *dhotis* while playing. Among Musalmāns in Sindh, a dried fig is handed over to the bride who is asked to hold it fast in her fist and the bridegroom is asked to take it by force. If he does not succeed, it produces mirth and if he smiles he is fined Rs. 5 "for sweets."

Widows.—Among Visābhārgav Brahmans widows are necessary at the marriage. They are called *doshis* and have to be present along with the Joshis, while in no other high caste a widow is allowed to take any part in the ceremonies, her presence being considered inauspicious.

Divorce.—Among Anjana Kunbi, divorce and widow-marriage are permitted. The Bhils of the Panch Mahals allow widow-marriage and divorce. The Gujerāti Lohārs also allow divorce and remarriage. Among Nāya-Kades and Kolis, divorce is purchasable by the wife for Rs. 16 to 60; the husband who does not want his wife simply turns her out and pays nothing.

Curious Customs.—Among Bhātiyas, *Chhaki* is the name of a custom in which the bride goes to the house of her future father-in-law before the marriage and sprinkles, a little milk over him with the end of a mango-leaf. At this moment he shows her a bag full of rupees, she takes one coin and goes back to her palanquin but before she starts the lady of the house, her future mother-in-law requests her to get down and with the help of a priest blesses her and throws coloured rice over her head. Here is an indication of the purchase of brides for their sons, from the local milkmaids by foreign merchants with the consent of their own wives.

Cocoanut Offerings.—Of this offering, half the quantity goes to the father of the bridegroom, one-fourth to the maternal grandfather of the bridegroom, and the remaining fourth to his paternal grandfather. This present is called *Shikār* by the Bhātiyas and has curious humour about it as it is possibly an offering out of the loot (Shikar *bhāg*) from the ships captured by the pirates whose *kshatriya* descendants they claim to be.

Grihapravesha.—Nobody from the bride's house accompanies the married couple "home" on the first occasion among Maheshri Banias. In the Gujerati Sonār caste, the mother of the bridegroom carries in an iron tray a lamp called *ramanadiva* and the sister carries salt, but the latter rides a horse, the bridegroom goes in a *rath*, and never gives way to any carriage or conveyance coming from the opposite side.

The 'Horn' of Plenty.—Among the Brahmans when the bride enters her husband's house for the first time, she has to upset a "measure" of rice placed near the threshold. It is said to indicate that the bride is the goddess of plenty whose advent produced heaps of rice all over the place.

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